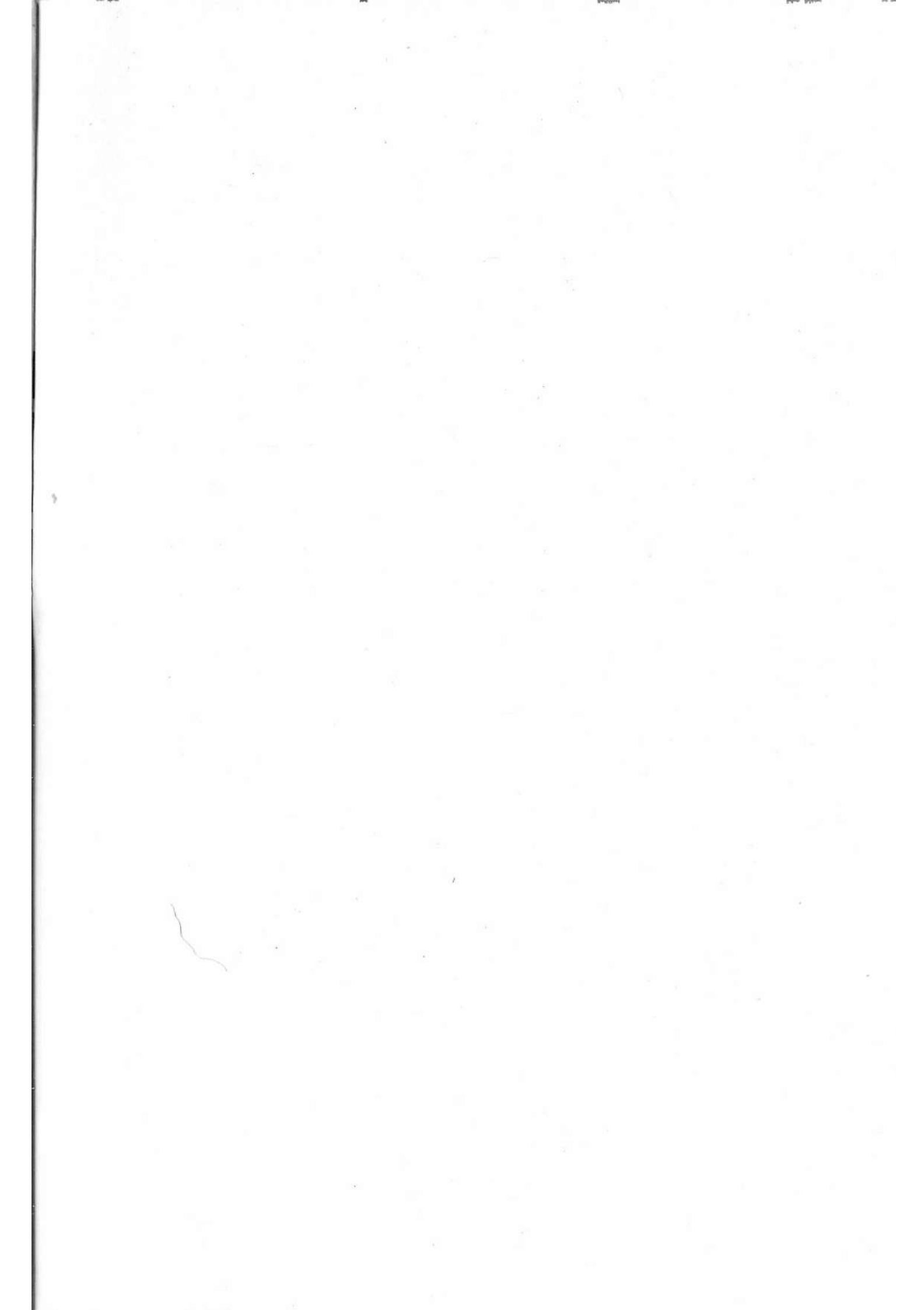


THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO





MISS GORDON HOLMES

# IN LOVE WITH LIFE

A PIONEER CAREER WOMAN'S STORY

BY

MISS GORDON HOLMES

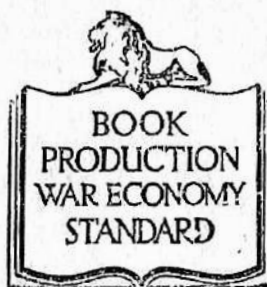
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DEDICATED

TO MY FRIEND

DR. HELEN BOYLE

WITH MY LOVE AND MY THANKS FOR  
ALL THAT SHE HAS GIVEN ME DURING  
THE YEARS SINCE 1918

AND TO

THAT HEROIC COWARD, THAT TERRIFIED  
OPTIMIST—MYSELF

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## CHAPTER I

I'VE had a glamorous, romantic life since I was twenty. I've travelled over half the world. I've had a career that has seemed to me incredibly lucky. My income, and I've never had a sixpence I haven't earned, has risen from £1 a week to—at its height—a steady £4,000 or £5,000 a year. Have I ever been in love? Always. In love with life, people, projects, things, thought. Always in love, always some star on the horizon.

I have had a few ups and downs (such as most intense love affairs do have), but I am still at fifty-nine absorbingly, longingly in love with enchanting life. When people discuss pensively, "If I could live my life over again how would I like it to be?" all I would ask for would be the same life all over again. To my fond memory no change could make it better. I could hardly dare to hope it would seem as good.

Do you remember Priestley's play "We Have Been Here Before"? Its theme the ever-recurring spiral of our personal lives, always the same, the pattern ever repeated. Is one sometimes dimly conscious of breaking one's life-spiral, and, like Priestley's two characters, with tremendous birth-pangs, starting another life-spiral—something other than "we have been here before"? Something that distinctly says, "No! Not here! Not here! This is different."

All I would ask for would be this life-spiral all over again. I will immediately appear to contradict that by saying that, of course, I would much rather begin to live my life now, in 1943, than when I did begin in 1884. I can look back on nearly sixty years of glorious life, but I honestly can't remember anything that was better in the older days and generations than it is now—even now, in the middle of the second World War. Or as good. Present-day young women in particular fill me with happy pride. Life, in spite of wars and ten-shilling Income Tax, is marvellous in its "opening out," its vistas for us all. Now, even now, life is much more satisfying for a much greater number of people than it was fifty years ago in the not-so-gay nineties.

However, I've loved my life-spiral. I once had my hand "read" by a Welsh amateur palmist when I was sixteen. She remarked that I would never marry, that I would travel a great deal,



and added with a very puzzled air, "There is something you will succeed in, but I can't see what it is." I don't wonder at her puzzlement, since in 1900 to forecast that a woman would succeed in "finance" would have seemed absurd.

I haven't married. I certainly have "travelled a great deal." My first Continental trip was a fortnight in Bruges with my mother in 1901 on £4 10s. inclusive for the two of us. And Bruges ever since has haunted me. Its belfry, its carillon, its canals, its quays and spires and red-roofed medieval houses crowded among green trees. But, above all, its belfry and carillon. In after-years almost every summer saw me in Bruges for a few days. Whenever I made my business or pleasure journeys through Europe, to and from Budapest, Amsterdam, Turkey, Egypt, Germany and where-not, at some point in my itinerary I found myself in Bruges. Sitting with the deep satisfaction of heart's desire at a little table in the Grande Place outside the Pannier d'Or, looking, looking up at the beautiful grey dream in stone of the belfry and listening, listening to that wind-borne carillon.

"You will travel a great deal." Bruges in 1901, week-ends in Paris, in Holland, a fortnight in Spain in 1906. America (my America!), Canada, Scotland and Ireland in 1911, Switzerland and Italy in 1913. Then the War years and no more continental trips until 1919, when I dashed over to see if Bruges was still there. And it was. As beautiful as ever (and let's be fair, somewhat cleaner for the German occupation). Then began my affluent business years. With them came America and Canada again in 1920, Paris for a Medical Congress in 1923, Brittany for Christmas, 1924. Then 1925 and South America and the United States—my America again.

Then came my own car and chauffeuse. (No, I can't drive, but I have been driven by girl drivers almost from the Sahara Desert to the Arctic Circle without one serious accident or incident.) Motor-ing all over England, Scotland, Ireland, to see the provincial picture galleries (and Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Newcastle, Edinburgh, Dublin, have lovely things). Switzerland in 1926, Spain and Tangier for Christmas in 1927. Budapest, Prague, Jugoslavia, Roumania, Germany, and so on, on business trips every year after that, sometimes twice a year, on the fascinating Orient Express. Winter sports in Celerina in 1928 with a completely medical party who proved unbelievably hilarious away from their

brass plates, Egypt via Gibraltar, Malta and the Nile, and home-ward via Venice in 1930. Somewhere in between, I think about 1927, Constantinople, Athens, Rome (and the poppies blowing on the Roman Forum!), and Florence—golden Florence. Then, convalescing after a long illness, a ten weeks' Continental motoring tour, and the picture galleries of Europe. (Oh! Munich, Dresden, Amsterdam!) Then a Christmas motoring tour from Calais to Seville and back again to see the picture galleries of Spain (and the amazing Caves of Santilliana).

And in 1933, a summer that had "white spots" all through it (white spots are what brilliantly happy moments look like to my inward gaze as I look back over my life), I conceived the idea of week-ending in France. With the aid of the A.A.—how efficient they were, and how kind!—I garaged my big car in Calais, bought a little bull-nosed Morris for £13, in which my chauffeuse and I used to race down to Dover on Friday afternoons, leave the Morris at the Lord Warden Garage, catch the last boat over, and find ourselves in Calais about 7 p.m., to be met by that enviable A.A. representative, Major Stuart, with the reassuring news that our big car was "all right and waiting." Fifty miles into France or Belgium that night, and Saturday morning would see us in some sunny hotel courtyard with our coffee and rolls, while Sunday night always saw us back in Dover. But in the meantime we had week-ended in Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam—incredible distances did my cheerful girl chauffeuse drive—and we wound up that summer of seventeen Continental week-ends by motoring from Calais, through Belgium, Holland, Germany, Denmark, to Sweden and Norway, stopping wistfully short only a hundred miles from the Arctic Circle, as time forced us to scramble back to Gothenburg and ship home from there.

The next year, a month of motoring from London all through Italy to the extreme tip of Sicily and back. In 1935 I flew to Russia with a woman medical friend, and went a round of the Leningrad and Moscow hospitals. After that more motoring trips, all motoring. To Brittany with the Michelin Bon Cuisine Guide; lovely Ireland (and its fuchsia hedges). And a Christmas dash in horrible cold and rain through France, Spain and Portugal to Tangier—still cold and rain—to Marrakesh, sunshine at last. I remember on that trip among all those susceptible peoples I had a beautiful chauffeuse of twenty-two. But though her film-star loveliness at-

tracted all eyes everywhere, it never caused me a moment's embarrassment, such a credit was she to her mother's bringing up. And she was as competent as she was pretty.

Ah! that was 1936, and in the following July I struck the International Federation in Paris. And thereafter my travels were mostly with, for, and on behalf of my beloved International. Stockholm and the U.S.A. in 1937; the U.S.A. and Budapest in 1938; the U.S.A. and Norway in 1939; the U.S.A. in the last gay luxury-steamer style in 1940. And then, in 1941, Lisbon, the Clipper, the U.S.A. and Canada—15,000 miles of flying, all over the U.S.A. and Canada, speaking everywhere. And that huge slow convoy of a hundred ships and its long amble safely home. Yes, the palm-reader was right; I have "travelled a great deal."

I have had a great deal to do with people of many nationalities all my life. My first eight business years were spent daily among Danes, Swedes, Norwegians—quiet peoples these. The next eight years among—by contrast—hectic Americans and Canadians; while during the last twenty years I have mixed with business contacts all over Europe. Finally, there have been the Federation contacts—Europeans, Americans, Canadians, in their thousands, and more British people than I ever met before.

To get back to my life-spiral. There is an advantage in starting from beginnings so small, hopes so modest as to be almost non-existent. Up to my thirties I was always poor, but did not know it because each year saw me a few pounds better off than the previous year. In fact, I always regarded my household of my mother and myself as most comfortably off (£1 to £2 a week) because we never owed anything, and our bills were punctually paid—indeed, we never had any bills; our small tradesmen were the sort who demanded cash and got it.

I always had some star on the horizon. In my late teens writing a novel, in my early twenties publishing it, a quite easy matter; the first publisher I sent it to accepted it. Then there was four years saving and planning for my first American trip. After America, the star of another job (at that mythical £2 5s.), and when I got it the sheer bliss of work, new, difficult, and exacting financial work that I thoroughly enjoyed all through my thirties and forties, and still enjoy. In my early fifties, when I was beginning to get a little restive and perhaps conscience-stricken with so much love of living and enjoyment of success, travel, everything, came the thrilling

plunge into the international world of women's work—above all, American women's work—and the following years were among the most vivid of my vivid life.

No. I was always poor in my younger days, but I have never known poverty. And though I was well-to-do, very well-to-do in the pre-war years, I never knew the bother of wealth, if such a term can be used of my modest affluence. I have no sense of possession; hence I didn't get cluttered up with things that have little more than nuisance value. I only acquired a pleasant suburban house; I didn't want a country house and a town residence—the charming London suburbs for me, with their pretty little gardens where spring and the almond blossom seem to come so early every year. I loved clothes and I had them, but only in reasonable amount. I wanted a Siamese cat and perpetual kittens, and I had them for years, noisily galloping about the place. And though I adored motoring, I loved still more abidingly my daily morning walk to the City from Victoria Station past Gorringes' pleasing windows, through lovely St. James's Park, the view from the little foot-bridge, the Embankment with its whirling, screaming seagulls and its drift and ebb of tides. And whenever I came across anything that my constructive sense—almost the strongest sense in me—told me could be helped on with a little money I had that pleasure also.

Perhaps the greatest drawback in my middle years has been the attack of phlebitis in 1931 that gradually took away my walking capacity. But it was gradual, it wasn't a sentence of doom pronounced all at once, and by the time I had absent-mindedly begun to realise I should probably never be able to walk more than half a mile again, other interests, new exciting stars, had flashed across my horizon that absorbingly carried me from 1936 to 1941.

1941! Ah! That autumn of 1941 was a depressing period for me—with a vista of more depression. I realised that my annual visits to America and Canada were over—at any rate for many years to come; those visits that had lent such a glamour to my life for the last six years. Travelling, permits, convoys, Clippers, and many other unpredictable factors, all had become too difficult. I knew even while I made my last flying dash from coast to coast that it might be my swan-song to my America and that dear American way of life. I realised that I must do something to fill that emotional gap, that sudden sense of vacuum, of life stopping short, almost reversing in its tracks for me.

I remembered that years ago, in 1936, a friend much younger than myself said to me, "Gordon, you ought to write your life—and *you* ought to do it; nobody else can do it for you. Because you've not only had a real life but you're still having it. Paris, the Federation, off to Stockholm next summer, talking about America after that. Yours is a real life, while women of my sort of generation just footle around, even though we work and earn our living. Our lives don't seem to have the proper bone structure to them like yours of your generation."

Her remark came back to me driving over the Serpentine Bridge on October 13th, 1941, and I suddenly decided that I would create the mental occupation that I felt I must have—no, diversion, I had plenty of occupation—by writing the story of my, to me, glamorous life. I felt it would satisfy me to make a good job of it. That's what I kept saying to myself. "Never mind what anyone else says. Do write something that satisfies you, even if it's never published."

When I began I wondered how one wrote one's life-story—in bits and pieces as they came into one's mind or in their chronological order? Then I happened to read Gunther's emphatic advice to a journalistic friend: "Write *what* you like *as* you like." And that was good enough for me. So that's the way I've written this.

I've tried to tell the truth, and nothing but the truth. But I certainly haven't told the whole truth. Nobody can, about themselves. One always suppresses. Whatever one puts down is always "edited" by one's inner self. "Don't say that!" "Don't tell them that!" It is impossible to get past that enormous inner wall of emotional reserve. Pushing the wall back is like pushing back infinity. The wall is still there, finity instead of infinity.

So in this book I've said what I did with fair success and what I thought with some accuracy. But what I felt—no! I've only touched on the outermost layer of feelings. And every time I've feebly tried, with some sense of the obligations of integrity, to strip off a few more layers of feeling—useless, fathoms left.

But I have tried to avoid the inevitable varnishing, the rationalizing, which is the way one gets through life. Over and over again I have said to myself in jotting down this story, "No, don't invent things. You know you didn't feel this, or think that. You might have done, you wish you had. But you didn't. Don't invent things."

And I've tried to cut out any pseudo-profundity—all attempts at being profound where I have nothing profound to say and nothing

in particular to say at all. Someone once said to me: "You are not a deep thinker, but you can think deeply." That's about it. Life for me has spread too vigorously over too large an area of practical happiness and activity for deep thinking. But there are occasions when I dive below the surface for a brief moment to find out what it's all about—and come up content to leave it at that.

## CHAPTER II

My very modest outlook on life when I was young was partly due to poverty and partly due to the impact and crushing effect of being the only girl among three brothers and a father all brought up in the masculine tradition, plus a mother brought up in the feminine tradition. The masculine tradition ruled rampant in our household. Those were the days, the eighteen eighties and nineties, when men were not merely the masters of their own households, but the tyrants of their own households.

Our poverty-stricken home meant for me little schooling, few pleasures, and almost no new clothes. My lack of schooling meant that until my very late teens I had no girl friends. And no sisters, no girl friends, no school life, meant no silliness—that vital "must" for young growing things. The result was that I grew up incurably shy, gauche, unsocial. And I have remained that way ever since. Time has enabled me to appear a good mixer—for very short periods and by very great effort—but I am always in a nervous dither underneath. I am shy with that paralytic shyness that seizes one at every and any moment when it shouldn't, leaves one outwardly completely self-possessed and inwardly feeling like death at dawn. I remember once standing within a yard of the late Lord Leverhulme—the first one, the old man—and when someone wanted to introduce me, and I longed for an introduction, I simply backed away in terror and cowered in a corner. I can remember that tiny scene repeated so often throughout my life that I have long ago become used to it, and I know that in similar circumstances I shall probably behave "like that."

And of course I envy people immensely who have got social sense and social tact and social popularity. But probably envy them in the way we envy people who have qualities we haven't got partly

because we wouldn't be willing to make the effort, pay the price. No one so longs at moments for the conventional graces and gains as your unconventional person. Popularity—lovely! Surely a thing that smooths and soothes your way through life! But the effort, not to achieve it, that is easy; but to keep it up, keep it up all the time!—exhausting.

Of course I was a tomboy, vigorous and vital of lung and limb. But the scorn and reproach implied in that word so often hurled at me in the eighties! My tomboyishness, my physical lack of graces—and particularly my hands—were a continual source of humiliation to me. My hands—because when I was about three years old an aunt picked up my hands, looked at them disapprovingly, and said to my mother, "She'll never have nice hands—too broad across the palm." To which judgment my mother smilingly acquiesced, belonging to a generation in which "nice hands" consisted of something of lily-white delicacy and boneless structure. Therefore all my young life I always knew that I hadn't got nice hands. Until somewhere in my thirties I suddenly looked at them, fine, powerful and characterful hands, and realized that if I had nothing else beautiful about me I certainly had beautiful hands.

My very large mouth was also supposed to be most unsightly, but that didn't worry me because at an early age my eldest brother referred to my mouth as a "cavern." I thought he said "cabin"—I had just been reading "Uncle Tom's Cabin." Hence the expression left no sting; it suggested something small and cosy.

In the end time gave me that invaluable thing, an impressive presence (height five feet nine and architecture more than in proportion). Time also gave me great outward self-possession and—a striking likeness to Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt. During my American speaking tours people used to stop and stare at me in the street, taxi-drivers ejaculate, press-men publish photos in profile of Mrs. Roosevelt and myself. Astrologists may be interested to know that Mrs. Roosevelt and myself are the same age, born within a few weeks of each other. Her birthday some time in October, mine September 30th. Non-astrologists will merely regard the birth date as a coincidence—quite a lot of people were born in 1884—and the likeness due to the fact that we both have Dutch forbears.

But early impressions die hard, if ever. I once remarked to May Sinclair, the famous novelist: "I always visualize myself as a mousey-looking little person!" And May Sinclair replied: "Did

you have a very repressed childhood?" A flattering morsel of sympathetic insight from a distinguished stranger that I rolled on my tongue ever after.

I must also have been born with a mild calamity complex. As a child of five or six my nightmare always was that I, we, all of us children were going to be deliberately abandoned by our parents (and a fonder mother no children ever had). And the recurring worry of the nightmare was how was I going to look after my younger brother (he was delicate), keep his pram out of draughts (he had just had pneumonia). Whenever we went on a railway journey I clung to someone's hand in an agony of fear that I was going to be deliberately left behind. When I began to earn my own living my conviction was that I should spend my old age in the workhouse. When I first became a householder (£27 per annum) my haunting fear was eviction for inability to pay the rent (no bills were paid more regularly than mine). And so on, and so on.

Since writing this an eminent psychiatrist said to me that there must have been some very early cause or shock to account for this persistent "desertion" complex. I certainly do remember a favourite anecdote my mother used to tell to the effect that when the family moved to Kew my twin brother and I—we were about nine months old—were parked with my grandmother and fond aunts for a week. When we were returned my mother took me in her arms, and always related—with great satisfaction at such sensibility on my part—that I immediately burst into tears, "And you cried as if your heart would break, as much as to say, 'Oh, why have you left me so long!'" While my aunts chorused, "Oh! and she's been so good the whole time; she hasn't cried once."

If this week's absence, "desertion" at nine months old by my mother, was the cause of my conscious desertion nightmares several years later, there is no moral to be attached to it in my opinion. It doesn't mean that parents mustn't leave their young at a tender age. After many years on medical committees I am not of the school of opinion that considers everything should be done to shield children from shocks. I prefer that everything should be done to make them shockproof. I grew out of my little desertion nightmares; if I hadn't had them I should probably have had something else, perhaps something worse. You can't shield highly strung children; they will create their own fears, if not from one thing, then another. And if you reply, "Don't let's breed these highly



strung children," the answer is, "Don't let's breed intelligence." Because you can't get the one without the other.

I remember listening to a discussion in a medical committee about a child of fourteen who had been getting on very happily at school until she was placed under a different teacher with whom she didn't get on, and the child was feeling the draught badly. One section of the committee said the child was possibly being ruined for life and should be instantly removed from that teacher. Another section said, No, it should be explained to the child that this was one of the things she must just face up to, that it wasn't going to last for ever, and that for the comparatively short time she was under that teacher she should just make the best of it. That even if she was taken away by kind friends from that teacher this time, she couldn't always expect friends to remove her troubles through life, but must learn to handle them herself. Also someone suggested it might be pointed out to the child that perhaps the teacher, too, had her troubles and difficulties.

I remember when I was about nineteen discussing with a girl friend what each of us most wanted from life. She wanted passionate love affairs. I said I wanted (I can quote the words now) "Congenial work, a few congenial friends, and a little congenial leisure." I dare say I wanted passionate love affairs too. Let's be frank. Who doesn't? Don't you? But I had a kind of feeling that they wouldn't come my way, and that if they did they wouldn't be my cup of tea. Up to then the one or two mild emotional affairs that had crossed my path had been awkward to handle. And any emotional affairs since have for the most part proved equally awkward.

I have never known how to handle my emotions except by just bundling them out of sight and getting on with something more interesting. "Sublimating" this is called, and very satisfactory it seems to me. And when it comes to handling other people's emotions in relation to myself, I'm done. I'm Irish, and I never know what I'll feel until I feel it. When anything upsetting happens, trivial or grave, I am apt to suffer from delayed shock. At the time I can even laugh it off—"defence mechanism" someone called it. But if I have been hurt, afterwards, perhaps long afterwards, is when I'll begin to know just how badly hurt. I am not able to take as a matter of course those ups and downs that probably occur in all types of emotional relationship. I always regard them as happening to me only, scurry about feeling like a criminal, get things out

of proportion—I can see it all long afterwards when it's too late to see anything at all—and either violently back out and lose a fond friend or land into a scene that certainly loses me to them. The few completely satisfactory emotional relationships I've had in my life have flowed along easily and uneventfully, love and confidence on both sides and none of those exhausting misunderstandings. Emotion, love, friendship, for me must flourish naturally. If it is a plant that needs continual artificial fertilizers, shielding from all the winds that blow, watering with one's tears, someone else can have that exotic orchid. Not for me that mixture of bliss and misery.

This probably all sounds naïve. Being fond—oh, very fond!—of someone is a profound emotional experience. But in the rare periods in my life when I have been through such an experience I have come up for air at the end of it, thankful to shake it all off me and get back once more on to that impersonal mental plane on which I live most naturally and happily. I think I admire people I see handling passionate personal emotional relationships successfully, but the wear and tear seems awful, and it's too narrow a life for me, however deep.

### CHAPTER III

I WAS born at 266 City Road, London, E.C., in 1884. Opposite was the "Eagle" public house of the popular song, "Up and down the City Road, in and out the Eagle. That's the way the money goes! Pop goes the weasel!" Opposite also was Windsor Terrace, of Mr. Micawber fame, and a dismal railed-in grass patch, fascinating to me because I heard my father say it was a Great Plague burial-ground, and that they dared not disturb it for fear of starting the Plague again.

I was christened Beatrice Gordon Holmes; my twin brother, the elder by forty minutes, Geoffrey Gordon Holmes. My twin was a delicate baby, I was healthy, but time turned us both into physically and mentally vigorous adults, alike mentally, alike in our aggressive and sanguine dispositions, but very unlike in character. We were a family of four, my eldest brother six and a half years older, my youngest brother eighteen months younger than u<sup>r</sup> twins.

My father was an unenergetic doctor, in theory a well-known

throat and ear specialist, but his ideas of grandeur always outran his earning energies, and a couple of hours a day was all he was willing to give to his profession. He moved the family to Kew in 1885, and was then responsible for rent at 266 City Road, where he conducted a small throat and ear dispensary; rent for rooms in Finsbury Square, where he conducted a very small private practice; and rent for the house at Kew where he lived, and where he refused to conduct any practice. All this on an income that never exceeded £400 per annum and was generally under £300. We were then a household of eight—my parents, four children, a maid and nurse. My father had a horror of debt and never owed anyone a penny throughout his life. The result was that my amazing mother ran the household on 30s. a week, including food for all and clothes for us children and herself (yes, she did!), and owing to her genius for household management and cookery we never knew a badly cooked or insufficient meal. In fact, my mother's cookery gave me a lifelong discrimination for really good cooking.

My father was an eccentric Irishman of brilliant but academic brains, morose disposition, and violent temper. He disliked human company, always had his meals by himself, always talked aloud to himself. He took long solitary daily walks; occasionally on a Sunday, when we were younger, with my mother and us children trotting breathlessly behind. A tall, thin, rapidly striding figure, umbrella carried across his shoulder like a musket, stopping only to peer shortsightedly at a bookshop, or at a cat. He disliked almost everything and everyone, but he liked cats (so do I). I have seen him in a deserted London street on a Sunday morning spend half an hour by an area railing trying to lift an indifferent cat out of the area with the crook of his umbrella, merely for the pleasure of stroking the cat for a minute or two before releasing it to its area home again. He was very distinguished-looking, with whiskers and beard that turned grey in his twenties, white in his thirties, and in his shabby silk hat and short, old-fashioned frock coat, he looked "the old gentleman" from his early forties.

He belonged to one of those Irish families who throughout centuries, dating from Cromwell's time, had always lived as gentlefolk on small private means that dwindled with each generation. The family had been presented by Cromwell, presumably in exchange for suitable help. with Castle Ardee, Co. Down, dating from the eleventh century, still in existence and now the oldest inhabited

castle in Ireland. Inhabited—but not by our family. The entail was cut in my father's childhood, and with it went the last meagre remnant of property and unearned income. My father was educated at Trinity, Dublin, Edinburgh and Brussels, and was put into medicine because the family were all unenergetic lawyers or doctors. He travelled round the world as a young ship's doctor, and disliked travelling ever after. In contempt for my travel mania he used to say, "Wherever you go it's all the same. In some places the houses have flat roofs and the men wear baggy trousers, and in some places the houses have high roofs, and the men wear tight trousers. That's the only difference, and travelling is a waste of money."

My father disliked his profession, said doctors did more harm than good, but that he was "in such a light line" it didn't matter. His inclinations were for classical research, chiefly conducted in the British Museum, in preference to bothering with patients or practice. He wrote several medical pamphlets as a young man, and after that settled down to an exhaustive work, "The History of Justinian and Theodora." It took him twenty years of research to complete, was published at his own expense, did not bring him the fame and fortune he always fondly expected, but gained for him a £150 grant from some Literary Fund controlled by Mr. Lloyd George and made him a convinced supporter of Mr. Lloyd George for ever after.

His medical pamphlets gained him, as a young man, the position of Chief Assistant to Sir Morell Mackenzie, the famous throat and ear specialist of the day. Sir Morell Mackenzie was called to Germany to give a specialist's verdict on the throat condition of the old German Emperor—who, after being crowned Emperor, died of the throat condition. My father was left in charge of Mackenzie's practice. For a few months dreams floated through my father's head of being called to Germany by Mackenzie as an assistant consultant and helping to make history. But world-famous specialists do not generally share historic opportunities with their young assistants. Mackenzie came home, the Emperor died, and my father set up in practice on his own account at 266 City Road.

My father was quite popular and successful with his dispensary patients. He had the greatest reliance on iodine for almost all outward ailments, and a tonic composed of Peruvian bark, gentian and lavender for all inward ailments. On this tonic the patients'

appetite picked up at once, up went their weight, half their troubles disappeared, especially if they were children, and the local application of iodine did the rest. At least that was his explanation of it, applied to simple and intricate cases alike, and his patients agreed. "I've been to doctors and hospitals for years, and your old gentleman is the first one to do me a bit of good," they used to tell my mother, who did his dispensing for him. He was far too uninterested in his profession and suffering humanity to want to try any treatment that would cause him more bother or mental exertion. In fact, "Oh, bother!" ejaculated in always irritable Irish tones, was his favourite exclamation, reply and summary of almost any situation in life.

My father was a wonderful amateur carpenter, but most unpractical. His things always looked beautiful, but came to pieces in your hands—whereupon he raged at you. And his death many years later was ultimately caused by a fall from a ladder made chiefly of firewood and french nails—he loved french nails. The thing made a hyperbolic curve halfway up under his ascent, my father fell to the ground from a considerable height and broke his hip, and never fully recovered.

There were few lighter or kindlier aspects of my father, but one incident became a legend in the family. My father was striding through an Imperial Institute Exhibition of the 'nineties, followed by my uncle and friends. A series of "Fruits of the Empire" (bottled) caught the eye. "Nectarines!" ejaculated someone of a particular bottle. "Apricots!" said my father. "Nectarines!" insisted the voice. My father, under the paralysed gaze of the attendant policeman, seized the exhibition bottle from its sacred stand, ripped the cork out with his penknife, speared out an apricot, held it aloft in triumphant silence, then plunged apricot, cork, bottle, back in their respective places, and strode on to the next room.

The paralysed gaze of the policeman caught the sympathetic eye of my uncle—lingering behind in ostentatious disassociation. And to him the policeman ejaculated, "What can you *do* with people like that?" Which became a family byword for ever after.

My father was a handsome man with a most distinguished head; my mother beautiful. And they produced a perfectly plain family. Neither my three brothers nor myself had any claim to good looks. But my mother used to say triumphantly: "Thank Heaven all my children look intelligent!"

## CHAPTER IV

My mother—ah! there was romance. My mother was born in South Africa, one of a large family, of wealthy parents.

My grandmother's family, the Van Bredas, figure throughout Dutch South African history. Servaas Van Breda led the Dutch and fought the British when the Dutch were forced to make their first trek from Cape Town to Durban, and the English put a price of £1,000 on his head. My grandmother used to tell with pride that on one occasion his Kafir friends strung him high up into the pointed roof of one of the Kafir kraals, where he stayed hidden in the darkness while the Redcoats were below looking for him, and no Kafir gave him away in spite of the fabulous fortune that £1,000 meant to them. Servaas Van Breda it was who, on the outbreak of war, seized an English frigate lying in Port Elizabeth, put all the English women and children on board her, and sent them in safety to the Cape. "Did he do that out of chivalry?" I asked my mother, deeply impressed by this consideration for the enemy's belongings. "Oh dear me, no," said my practical mother. "He didn't want the responsibility of looking after them."

Those were perilous times, and my great-grandfather thankfully accepted well-to-do young Adolf Coqui's offer of marriage for his fifteen-year-old daughter, my grandmother, Anna Fredricka Servaasina Van Breda. They were married without much yes or no on her part, and before she was sixteen she had her first baby—out on the veldt with no one but an old Kaffir woman to help her. The tent was surrounded by fires to keep the lions off, and my grandfather went out from time to time to shoot at them in the darkness while my grandmother's baby was being born—the first of ten children, among them my mother, Maria Thérèse Coqui, who was born in the Orange Free State.

My grandfather, Adolf Coqui, was a pioneer merchant of South Africa and a well-known financier in his day at No. 5 Lombard Street. My mother told me that he initiated the Colombo River Harbour Works, some of the German State Railways, and the Land Colonization Scheme of South Africa. (Among her papers after her death I found an old agreement regarding South African concessions between my grandfather and the famous Chief Lobengula, and remembered my mother saying, "Papa said 'Old Loben' was a

very good sort.") The family had a wide cosmopolitan heritage and background—South Africa, Germany, France, Spain, Rome.

My grandfather must have had an artless streak in him because he had his family tree traced back to Marcus Quintius Curtius, that legendary figure who saved Rome by throwing himself and his horse into the abyss that opened in the Roman Forum, and which the oracle declared could only be closed by the sacrifice of Rome's proudest possession. Apparently my kinsman guessed right, her devoted citizens were Rome's proudest possessions, and the abyss closed after him. *Civis Romanus sum*. (I have made no attempt to check the story or the legend. I give it and other family history as it was given to me in word-of-mouth family sagas from my mother.)

Life for my mother up to her teens was a fairy-tale life of exciting voyages from a beautiful English home to a beautiful South African home. A fairy-tale childhood of fond black nurses and favourite English governesses. Sugar-cane orgies in which "We children stuck sugar-cane through our beautiful muslin frocks to make them stick out like crinolines, because all our mothers were wearing crinolines, and mamma coming back from riding switched us with her riding whip for being so naughty."

Tales of mamma acting as hostess for the Governor and at a review at Government House—"the troops included a Scottish regiment in kilts, and there was such a gale blowing mamma said all the ladies had to look the other way."

Tales of a huge family Christmas in Germany at the Duke of Somebody's castle, and a wonderful Christmas tree in a ballroom lined with looking-glass: "Everywhere you looked you saw lighted Christmas trees, and you couldn't find the doors in the looking-glass unless somebody showed you!"

Tales of another children's party in England at which "Latimer Clarke, the man who afterwards laid the Atlantic cable, said he'd look after the children's supper table, and he mixed all their drinks. His own two little boys were carried dead drunk into the brougham, and when our governess took Connie and me to bed I sat down on the stairs and clung to the governess's ankles. I do remember, though, being in bed and Connie's thickly reproachful voice saying, 'Are you going to bed without saying your prayers, Thérèse?' as she knelt by the bedside. And hours later I woke up and saw Connie still kneeling there, fast asleep."

A fairy-tale childhood that all ended when my mother was twelve

years old, in the Overend and Gurney crash in 1866, in which my grandfather lost £60,000. The loss of £60,000 might not have ruined my grandfather, but he had a paralytic stroke the same day, from which he never recovered, although he lived for twenty-five years afterwards. My grandmother had that abysmal ignorance of business that the early Victorian age produced among women. She locked all my grandfather's business papers, unexamined, into an iron box, and with £5,000 in cash, that seemed all that was left after the disaster, took her remaining family of six handsome girls and boys and an invalid husband to South Africa, to Mauritius, to Germany, to Ceylon, on long visits to married sons and daughters. More exotic tales of shipwrecks, typhoons, tidal waves, and now love affairs for the handsome girls. Until after four or five years the £5,000 came to an end, and my grandmother brought her family and invalid husband back to London and started a boarding house in Bedford Square. She burnt all the papers in the iron box in the courtyard in Ceylon, unexamined, before her return to England. "Mamma said it was too heavy to carry about any longer."

My grandmother treated her boarders as guests; two or three of her handsome girls married, among them my mother, and when the boarding house failed, friends provided funds to send my grandmother and grandfather and the two remaining girls back to South Africa, where my grandmother set up a boarding house again in Johannesburg.

I was about two years old then, and I remember the night my grandmother left for South Africa. I was in my little cot in our nursery at Kew, and everything was very dark and there was a candle burning, outlining my mother's and grandmother's heads as they sat talking in very low voices while they stitched and sewed. I can remember no sense of affection for my grandmother (and knowing her later in life I am not surprised), but a warm childish feeling hovered round my grandfather, who came into the room in a very long brown overcoat that matched his brown beard and silently held out to me a box of bricks. The bricks were brownish too.

My grandmother ran her Johannesburg guest-boarding house as before, and ten years later, when that too failed, a most fortunate legacy of £6,000 came to her from a sister. By that time her husband was dead and her last girls were married. No! not well! None of that family of handsome, charming girls married "well."



The possible exception was the eldest daughter, Charlo, who, just as the fairy-tale childhood of wealth and beautiful homes and parties came to an end, married "Uncle Dick"—the son of Sir Richard Morgan, Chief Justice of Ceylon—and sailed off with him to the lavish household of the Indies of those days. My mother used to say, "Dick looked like a prince! Charlo used to turn up her nose at all the young men who hung around her, but she fell in love with Dick at first sight. Papa was ill when they married, but I do remember the bonnets of the bridesmaids. My dear! Charlo ripped them all to pieces and pinned them together on the morning of the wedding, and everybody said what pretty bonnets they were!"

What legendary heroes grown-up people seem to children, surrounded by fables as of gods and goddesses. To our childish ears my mother's tales of "Auntie Charlo and Uncle Dick in Ceylon" always sounded like royalty, endless servants, and gold plate. And the only time we children met Uncle Dick over here, in command of and riding magnificently at the head of the Ceylon Detachment for the Diamond Jubilee, he seemed very princely and royally kind to us children. Many, many years afterwards he used to write to my mother as if he and all his dependents were in penurious circumstances, but my twin brother, travelling to Japan on his first business trip, called in at Ceylon, and wrote to my mother: "Don't worry about Uncle Dick's letters. Thirty sitting down to dinner tonight and a servant behind each chair!"

My grandmother, true to type, spent her £6,000 legacy in continual voyages between South Africa, England, and Madeira during her remaining years of life, and when she died in South Africa in her eighties there was just a few hundred pounds left to comfortably settle up her affairs.

My grandmother was surrounded by legendary brilliance ("Mamma knew Shakespeare by heart before she was twelve years old"), but her family were ruled and rent and ravished by her tempers and tantrums, which went round with the erratic regularity of cyclones, always somebody in high favour and somebody in deep disgrace. They all adored her and were terrified of her. I only knew her when I was about twelve years old; she stayed in our house for a year or two after inheriting her legacy. She disliked girls, and consequently, while my three brothers were periodically jerked in and out of favour, I, as the only girl, was always out of favour. Her wayward moods made such a deep im-

pression on me—she could always make you feel like a criminal when she vented her displeasure on you by frozen looks and icy voice—that they gave me a lasting horror of scenes and quarrels, violent accusations and lavish reconciliations and all other forms of emotional dissipation.

As far as I know we have no Jewish blood in my family and no Jewish names. But when I read G. B. Stern's Matriarch stories, particularly "Mosaic," I am always reminded of my mother's family sagas. Such richly patterned backgrounds, such family dynasties, such regal rôles, such enviable ease and splendour and distinction, all belonging to bright, exciting worlds so far removed from ours.

## CHAPTER V

I WAS about nine months old when we migrated from London to Kew, and we stayed there until I was about four. Then my unpractical father found three rents on £300 a year impossible, and moved us all back to 266 City Road. I remember the moving back to London in a snowstorm on Christmas Eve, the final clearing of the furniture vans about two in the morning, and my mother's subsequent comment that, when my father gave the men a few shillings tip, he hadn't a penny left in the world until his dispensary opened the next morning; and she had only the food she had managed to bring from Kew for us children until the first patient trickled in and she was able to take the small fee (1s. or 2s. 6d.) and hastily send Alice, our maid, out to buy food.

I remember Kew, the Priory Green, and the pond beside our house, an old gentleman who took me for rides in his donkey chaise with nurse running alongside to retrieve me at the end of the road. But most of all I remember a small boy called Jacky who wore a double-breasted brass-buttoned reefer coat. And I fell hopelessly in love with Jacky in that double-breasted reefer coat. What the child looked like I have no idea. But that coat seemed to me the last word in enviable elegance, and I can see it now.

And at Kew I remember my first encounter with tomatoes. Some neighbouring girls called in and implored my mother to let them take "the twins" home for tea. They had a small conservatory in which were growing large red things which I thought were

super-strawberries. Held up in someone's arms, I picked one, and, taking a bite, discovered to my horror a completely alien flavour that had no resemblance to strawberries. At the same moment my twin brother Geoffrey began crying his heart out because his doll had been left at home (Geoff adored dolls; they always bored me—except a rubber doll that had a little tin whistle in the back of its head). So Geoffrey had to be sent home immediately, while I stayed on in the conservatory, but I have never felt any interest in tomatoes since. I may say I was always in demand for tea parties because I was so good, whereas my twin from sheer nerves always cried or was sick.

At Kew I remember also my first realization of death. Someone told me that Dr. Caskie, the doctor who looked after us children, was dead. And weeks after I remember sitting up in bed suddenly and saying to my mother, with a sense of actual grave sorrow, "Mother! I'm sorry that Dr. Caskie's dead."

What a long time children remember incidents that wound their vanity! When I was about the same age, three years old, one of my aunts was sitting reading a book. She put the book down and left the room. I picked the book up. She came back and said in the brusquely attractive manner that many people liked and I for ever after hated, "Oh, you bad little girl to lose my place!" That was all. But I never felt at ease with her again, though I was forty before she died.

A curious episode occurred to us children at Kew. My mother was away one day (I think my eldest brother had broken his arm and she had taken him to the hospital). Alice, our maid, was left in charge, and about eleven o'clock in the morning she came up into our nursery and told us in horrific whispers that there was "a man" downstairs. The next few hours passed in an exciting delirium of Alice rushing up and down to us, bringing progress reports from the front. The man wouldn't go. He demanded money. He would hurt us. We were not to move out of the nursery, but she, Alice, would defend us and prevent him coming upstairs. We children ate our luncheon rapidly—I remember the rice pudding—for fear the man should come and take it from us, and my youngest brother crawled under a little table. Alice's progress reports said the man was lying down in the spare bedroom. And finally came the terrific climax. Alice tore upstairs, her print dress swishing—how dresses swished in those days!—and said the man

was coming upstairs after her, and rushed us into mother's little sitting-room at the end of a passage, where, panting for breath, she banged the door shut and flung herself against it. By this time she had many times described the man to us—he was a tall, dark man and he wore a top hat (almost all men wore top hats in those days). Alice went out to reconnoitre, tore in again, said the man was just behind her, slipped out once more, and, holding the door open a crack, called me in an agitated voice to "Look! And see the man in the top hat!" I looked and saw him—and can see him now, something like an old-time opera-star-villain, top hat and all—while being perfectly conscious that there was no one in the passage but Alice. She told me to see, and I saw. And ever after she was able to call on me for corroboration. "You saw him, didn't you, Miss Trissie—a dark man in a top hat?" And I always agreed I had seen him. I certainly wasn't going to confess to anybody that I hadn't seen such an exciting sight; and, anyway, I had—while I knew perfectly well I hadn't. What happened after that? Oh, round about the time my mother might be expected home Alice came up and reported that the man had "walked down the path and out of the garden gate," and we were all let out of the sitting-room, taken back to our nursery, washed and brushed, and presented in perfect order for my mother's return.

The tale was told to our parents; my corroboration was called for and given. The police were informed; they came and took notes, were unable to trace the man. A few weeks later, presumably feeling that the excitement was dying down, Alice rushed in one night and declared that going to the pillar box to post a letter she had been chased by the selfsame man "round a tree." Then the police emphatically stated that they didn't believe there was any man. And the whole thing was completely forgotten. The curious thing is that, although always up to middle life I have been afraid of burglars, afraid of the dark and so on, I do not remember being in the least frightened during that day of Alice's man. I think I must have been quite conscious somewhere at the back of my mind that Alice was just telling fairy tales and—here perhaps was the reassurance—obviously thoroughly enjoying herself.

Incidentally, all men wore silk hats, "toppers," in those days. I remember overhearing two shabby thieves in a wretched London street discussing their thieving operations—until one of them observed my open-mouthed stare and growled at me, "Run away,

little gel!—run away!” But they were discussing their thieving in top hats.

Alice was with us for some years after that as general servant and nurse. Of course, if my mother had had the benefit of modern psychology she would have known that to keep such a maid in charge of four young children was just asking for all sorts of terrible consequences for us in later life. But she didn't know, and as far as I know there were no consequences.

Alice is my earliest recollection of a whole series of maids. She came from an Orphanage for Soldiers' Daughters. She was kind and cheerful. I can still hear her briskly mournful voice singing “Oh, take me home again, Kathleen! Across the deep blue sea,” to a tune that still haunts my ears, though I have never heard it since. But she kept on stealing shillings from my father's very modest surgery accounts, was caught in the act by him and dismissed, to our mild regret.

(God bless my soul! What a coincidence! Even as I lie on my sofa revising this very chapter on October 31st, 1942, at 8.45 p.m., the radio beside me bursts into this very song in Irish Half-Hour: “Oh, take me home again, Kathleen! Across the deep blue sea.” And the tune is just the same as Alice tunefully sang it in that dark little basement kitchen at 266 City Road fifty years ago. I had always vaguely thought that Alice had probably made it up, since she never sang more than the first two lines over and over again. The B.B.C. audience enthusiastically applauds its simple and moving melody.)

What strange things one does hear from one's casual twiddle of the B.B.C. knob—a voice singing in a concentrated weariness of irritation, “Boots, boots, boots, boots, marching over Africa!” And what beautiful things! Does anyone remember with me a moment ten years ago when the B.B.C. music-man said: “Every budding soprano thinks she can sing ‘The last rose of summer.’ Here it is as it should be sung—a record by a prima donna at the Court of St. Petersburg in 1910.” And for a few forever unforgettable moments “The last rose of summer” floated out, an effortless enchantment, a beautiful sigh. One knew that one had never heard the revelation of that song before. Floating notes of loveliness. Ultimate perfection.)

However, to get back to Alice and 266. About that time my father's idea of grandeur induced him to move into 317 City Road,

an enormous affair, with huge flights of stairs, attics, and basements. Various overworked, underpaid, single-handed "generals" came and went for the next fifteen years, often staying a year or two or longer because they were so fond of my mother. But through almost all of them ran the usual sordid tale of drink. Almost all servants seemed to drink in those days. I remember we children used to look out of the nursery window and watch the maid, any maid, on her Sunday afternoon out make a bee-line for the public house directly opposite. There was nothing else for them to do on a Sunday afternoon in London.

Now—a drunken maid is a rarity, something abnormal. Attractive alternatives, cinemas, theatres, music-halls, cheap and pleasant tea-shops everywhere, have done more to stop drink and spread sobriety than all the preaching and teaching that preceded them. So often well-directed commercialism cures moral and psychological plague spots that no uplift can touch. And in this connection I remember it being said many years ago, before the motoring and easy transport era, that, in Canada, Timothy Eaton and his famous Mail Order Catalogues, "the Canadian Bible," had done more than all the doctors could do to cure the nervous and mental disorders at one time so prevalent among the lonely farmers' wives and women on remote ranches.

Agnes, who was with us for six years, is another of the drunken memories. Married young, her husband died leaving her with several children, and Agnes drank away her tiny assets and landed herself and the children in the workhouse. From there my mother took her, and when the eldest daughter was fourteen took her also. The daughter was a most proper young person, and always held it against her mother that "she drank all our lovely mourning away after father died." But Agnes kept comparatively sober under my mother's eye, except on her half-days out, when she frequently reeled in drunk, and collapsed on her bed in a drunken stupor for half the next day.

On two occasions during her six years with us my mother took us to the seaside for a week or two, leaving Agnes in charge of the house alone with my father. (A fortnight at Littlehampton with the windmill on the common and roses—roses—climbing the front of the little lodging-house where we always stayed. And the landlady there drank too.) On each occasion Agnes pawned everything available in the house—silver tea services, clothes, all portable

pawnables—and ended up in delirium tremens, a laconic postcard from my father notifying my mother of the fact. Then Agnes spent months, possibly years, repaying the cost of redeeming our goods. She was always bitterly repentant, imploring forgiveness, always with the same expression, “It’s a mannia, mum, it’s a mannia!” Nobody hated the “mannia” more than Agnes did, no one worshipped respectability more than Agnes did. She always wore a veil when she went out—“I don’t feel respectable without.” She was always ashamed of the workhouse episode, and always referred to it in our hearing as “an institoshun for widows and orphans.” But the point is that a few cinemas, bright lights, warmth and gaiety, would have cured Agnes. “A cinema a day keeps the drink away” might almost be a good slogan for the movie trade to adopt.

I had personal experience of the drunken servant problem when I was very young. When my grandmother received her legacy of £6,000 all the remnants of her family circle in South Africa apparently swooped down on her and it. She wanted to come to England and they wanted her and her legacy to stay there. She sent some sort of SOS to my mother to come to her rescue. My father, under the glamour of the legacy, advanced the third-class fare and my mother sailed away—only to find when she got there that she was now out of favour with my grandmother, who had become reconciled to her family circle in the meantime, and was engaged in her age-old pastime of playing royal favourites with the glamour of the legacy to aid her.

However, for six weeks I, aged about twelve, was left in charge of that huge house, my father (who was only just recovering from the only serious illness of his life, phlebitis), three brothers, and a drunken servant. She was a kind, motherly old soul when she wasn’t drinking. She had d.t.’s and I locked her in her bedroom, and finally, in desperation, stopped her wages during the last week before my mother’s return to prevent her buying drink. Hence she was quite sober and bowed them all into the hall with the air of an old retainer the night they swept in from South Africa, informing my mother that “Miss Trissie” had managed beautifully, and that all had gone well during my mother’s absence.

I remember in the course of that fifteen years one maid who didn’t drink because she attended Salvation Army meetings on her day off. Finally she joined the Army—the point of her con-

version being the Salvation bonnet borrowed from a friend. Hannah tried it on in front of the looking-glass in my mother's sitting-room, all of us watching interestedly, and she was so fascinated by the effect that she went and joined right away in the friend's borrowed bonnet.

Cheap drink, bright pubs, nowhere else to go even for a cup of tea, nothing else to do even in the pouring rain, fog, or cold of a London winter Sunday afternoon or night—that was the crux of the drink problem, at any rate among servants.

## CHAPTER VI

WHEN we moved to 317 City Road we children were sent to church every Sunday morning and children's service in the afternoon because we lived next door to the Vicarage. I remember the only visible result. Learning about that time the simple art of sampler making, I decided to work "something out of the Bible" for my mother. I knew instantly what. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" My mother tried to persuade me to choose "Allelujah" or "God is love," and pointed out that the line of my choice had no meaning on a sampler. But it had a meaning for me, and I stuck to it, and eventually presented the sampler to her. I think my nine-year-old mind was affected by the tragic simplicity, the moving emotional philosophy, contained in those ten words.

But I detested Sunday church. Church meant two hours of complete boredom and a hat that hurt my head. But surely not the same hat? Yes, in those days and in our household Sunday hats were Sunday hats and went on Sunday after Sunday for years, and that hat hurt my head. A hard, bright-brown felt hat that every few minutes I stealthily put my hand up to and shifted to a new position to ease the intolerable pressure and pain. My mother didn't believe my complaints, said I was just fidgeting, and forbade me to keep on pulling at my hat. Hence the stealthiness. She said sternly that people would think I was trying to scratch my head. This, incidentally, indicated one of the terrors of all mothers with young children—lice, fleas, bugs. No matter how careful you were, your children occasionally picked up something somewhere. And



then the hunt was on, with fine toothcomb and disinfectants. The disappearance of such fears among all except the very poorest classes says a lot for modern hygiene, in spite of evacuee revelations. I noticed a police matron recently remarking on the infinite improvement in such matters in her lifetime in the prison population under her charge. "Short sleeves, low necks, short skirts, short hair, perms and shampoos have accomplished a revolution in standards of cleanliness among girls," she said.

However, apart from the hat, nothing could have made me like church, because I hated boredom. My one total lifelong abiding hate has been mental boredom. And the sermons preached in our parish church in the City Road in the 'nineties, whether by rector or curate, meant plain mental boredom for child or adult.

I can remember that, once, some visiting preacher caught my bored mind for a moment with a never-forgotten sentence from Renan, written with a yearning nostalgia for older faiths. "The beautiful roses of the past have faded, we of the present are but living on their scent, and they that come after us will have but the memory of that fragrance." But the fact remains that in spite of all my mental love affairs, my emotional awakenings, I never at any stage in my life "fell in love" with religion in any shape or form. I thought and argued about religion in my late teens, until I outgrew that form of mental interest. I have received a sense of moral or emotional revelation through music, art, literature or beauty in other forms, and of course through personal relationships, but I have never received it through religion. Possibly those seven years from eight to fifteen of compulsory Sunday morning church and afternoon children's service—the haunting horror running through all the weekdays, low tension point Monday morning, high tension point Thursday onwards—made me bleakly indifferent to all religion under the name of religion for ever after.

My mother sent us to church because we lived next door to the Vicarage, because the small circle of people revolving round the Vicarage sewing parties, church, and Sunday-school were the only people of our class in the neighbourhood; and because she thought children ought to go to church anyway. She wasn't in the least religious herself. I remember many years later she remarked that, whereas as a young woman she held the conventional religious ideas, one reading of Ernst Haeckel's "Riddle of the Universe" had dissipated those conventional ideas, and she neither acquired nor

seemed to need others to take their place. In her old age she had a mild interest in spiritualism and—by way of a guileless streak in her make-up—was always all her life ready to listen to any stuff about palmistry, astrology, mediums, cards or tea-leaves. When she was a young woman someone had “read” her hand and told her she would not live to be old. This statement made a permanent impression on her. She used to refer to it directly and obliquely: “Wait till I’m gone!” or, “You’ll be sorry one of these days!”—another haunting sentence of my childhood and youth. Actually she lived until she was eighty-four, but it was only when she was past sixty that she began to divest herself of the doom hanging over her invented by that casual but never forgotten “prediction.”

My mother took a mild interest in spiritualism in her old age because my eldest brother was a devout student. Once she informed me that she had been present at a séance where “they described your father and said he was in a bright-blue suit. I told them he was a doctor, and never in his life had a bright-blue suit.”

I suddenly recollected my father sitting beside me when I was about three years old on the staircase at Kew with a clock on his knee which he was winding or adjusting—and he was clad in a bright-blue cutaway coat—bright blue. And I reminded her of it. She at last recollected it, but excused herself by saying, “Well, it was only a bright-blue coat; he had no trousers to it, and they said he was wearing a bright-blue suit.”

Regarding astrology, I, like many others, watched astrology with mild attention from Munich-time 1938 to June 1940. My incredulous interest was attracted by that much-advertised prophecy of Old Moore for September 1938, printed ten months earlier in the previous November: “A most dangerous, ominous position, clearly threatening war or an international crisis of the first magnitude arising with almost incredible and volcanic suddenness. War, in Central Europe, will only be averted with the greatest difficulty. . . . The U.S.A. Government will engage in European political affairs, and more peaceful conditions may be the outcome of their overtures.”

Well, there you have it, and widely as it was quoted in the press—I first saw it by “Londoner” in the *Evening Standard*—I never heard any feasible explanation of such word-by-word accuracy except daring guesswork.

After that I read one or two of the most popular astrology books

as they came out, saw them all prophesy there would be no war, or would be no world war, that Hitler would never see another birthday, that Ribbentrop was clearly marked for a suicide's grave, took in a weekly "Stars" paper for a few months, until it stopped publication, asked friends about their favourite mediums. But I have never been able to discover one thread of consistent accuracy anywhere. I would like to think there was something in "the stars," it might brighten life a lot, but I haven't been able to note it. As for those newspaper astrology columns that forecast your individual fate week by week or day by day according to your birth date, I used to look at them with eager, surreptitious interest. I found that if they prophesied a poor week I started Monday morning with depressed forebodings, only to find by Friday that nothing prophesied had happened, but that I had gone through as much misery as if it had. The opposite way, a good week forecast, and my jaunty optimism would be cruelly shaken by the first small contretemps. So I came to the conclusion that I am far too suggestible, far too easily "anybody's mug" for star study. And now I weakly but resolutely refuse to look at any birthday column if it comes my way.

I have said that I have been unable to feel personally the appeal of religion, but I have an intense respect, deference, reverence, for the deeply spiritual personality. Materialists are not interesting people, but the fact is there are so few of them one can hardly judge. Rare is the person who is not aware of non-material values—devotion to a person, a cause, a country. All of us have values in our lives no money could buy.

The kind of God I admire is the austere God of the Old Testament as presented by Wells in a flashing paragraph: "Other races and peoples have imagined diverse and fitful and marvellous gods, but it was the trading Semites who first began to think of God as a Righteous Dealer, Whose promises were kept, Who failed not the humblest creditor, and called to account every spurious act. The moral teaching of the Hebrews was saturated by such ideas. 'With what measure ye mete, the same shall be meted unto you.'"

After countless ages of mythology, of superstition, of cruelty. Of gods that demanded virgins sacrificed on bloody altars, young men flung from topless towers. Of gods misshapen, deformed, hideous, pictured with as many legs as a centipede, as many eyes as a fly. Or even of the fairy gods of Greek mythology and their

wayward oracles. After all these eons of "diverse and fitful and marvellous gods," what an agony of relief for mankind to come at last to a God who wanted nothing but "a humble and a contrite heart." Humble with that consciousness of unreached ideals (the biblical "sense of sin") that lives within us all. And Who, in return, "failed not the humblest creditor." Humanity's cry of the heart answered. "Oh Thou Who changest not, wilt Thou abide with me!"

## CHAPTER VII

NONE of us children went to school before we were eleven, and we had practically no friends. My mother's richly patterned background of relations, aunts, uncles, cousins, friends and acquaintances from all over the world, had all gradually faded away before time, poverty, and my father's completely unfriendly disposition. We saw once a year an Irish family in London with three children, whose family had been friends with my father's family for generations and who, forming a great affection for my mother, declined to be shaken off. We also occasionally saw the Vicar's little daughter, so pretty, popular, and well-dressed that she didn't seem to have anything to do with our world, and a little friend of hers called Hilda, with whom my susceptible twin immediately fell in love.

My mother was brought up in a tradition of brilliant Christmas parties within a family circle that was almost a dynasty, and the one thing she insisted on doing, let my father object as he might, was giving us children a Christmas tree every Christmas. To this were invited our few stray childish acquaintances with a sprinkling of grown-ups, and she saved and paid for it all out of the 30s. a week housekeeping money. These once a year Christmas-tree parties always seemed to our childish minds the height of magnificence, jollity, and excitement. And so they were. My mother with her lavish South Africa upbringing was always her sweet best as a warm and charming hostess, and even my father on that one occasion was induced by extraordinary pressure to appear comparatively genial, in an old-fashioned frock coat and velvet skull-cap, reaching out long arms to pluck things from the Christmas tree and hand them to the small guests with a comparatively pleasant

"Here you are! Here you are!" They were lovely Christmas parties.

And next door to us lived a large and very poor family—it was a wretched neighbourhood—and on Christmas Eve they always received a parcel as large as my mother could make it of our out-worn clothes, a huge cake, and a silver threepenny piece for each of the children. That was my mother.

Once a year also we went, after weeks of seething looking-forward-to excitement, to spend a whole day with an aunt who lived with her white-haired and completely deaf old mother in a little cottage at Twickenham.

We all walked from the City Road to King's Cross (pennies for trams were scarce), and took a train to Richmond—Richmond Station with its flower and fruit shops looking sunnily palatial, the sun always shone on those days for us. There kind Aunt Annie met us, we took another train to Twickenham, and after greeting the serene old lady and the story-book maid, Lily, and the dog and the cat and the enchanting tiny garden, sat down to roast chicken and jelly.

In the afternoon we were all taken to special "conker" hunting grounds, carefully selected after search beforehand by Aunt Annie. Twickenham is always carpeted with conkers in my memory. Then we came back to the little garden, were allowed to pull our own portions of radishes, lettuces, or what not, and sat down to tea with blissful scones and home-made jam and cake. After that we went home, laden with thousands of conkers—probably a dozen apiece—and discreet parcels of clothes to be made over for us children, and on one occasion a seven-pound glass jar of marmalade; I can still see its massive golden radiance.

During two or three summers we went down to Littlehampton for a fortnight when my mother was able to save the money out of the housekeeping to take us—it cost about £5. I know the amount because one summer, when prospects looked hopeless and she wanted to take us because we had all had childish ailments, a sudden gift of £5 arrived from some kindly aunt in South Africa, to my mother's joy.

And that is about the sum total of our childhood diversions, amusements, excitements.

Otherwise we played in our nursery, the three of us, my twin and I, both natural "leaders," contesting for our one follower—

my youngest brother. Hence, when sides had to be taken, he was jeered at as a "turncoat" because he couldn't be on both sides at once.

My eldest brother, six and a half years older, was already at school, and to us lived in an awesome adult world. Actually it was rather a grey world, poor child, because my father had a permanent feud with him, partly due to my father's "queer" temperament and partly belonging to that nineteenth-century era and before when it seemed to be the tradition for fathers to dislike their eldest sons.

My mother had her hands full trying to keep a peaceful household grouped around an almost impossible husband, teaching us all, making all our clothes, doing all the cooking and marketing, running a huge house with one cheap servant, helping my father in his dispensary, practically his only source of livelihood. But with it all she did succeed in preserving round us three younger children an atmosphere of childish care-free content—it couldn't be called happiness. I never knew the glow of real happiness until I got out of the home and was earning my own living—and then the happiness lasted for the rest of my life. I had a serene and repressed childhood and adolescence, and a serene and very unrepressed adult life, broken by a few rare periods of unmitigated emotional misery or worry—forgotten, to my astonishment, quite quickly once their cause was over.

My mother made all our clothes until the boys were earning for themselves and could afford cheap tailors, and made mine until my twenties. She dressed us charmingly as children (with made-overs from kindly aunts) and conventionally for the growing boys—except that she insisted on making their trousers with openings at the sides instead of in front, which caused them untold agony at school.

But my mother dressed me during my much too sensitive adolescent years as girls used to be dressed when she was a girl. With the result that I was a "sight" in any gathering, knew it, and knew also it was impossible to argue with my mother without deeply hurting her easily hurt feelings. Impossible for me at any rate, so I feigned complete lack of interest in clothes for many years.

In 1914, when I was thirty, war broke out. I found myself in charge of the Company I was working for, faced with the necessity

of calling on people in the City who never had a woman caller before, and a friend said to me, "If I were in your position I'd always keep my end up by dressing well." A great light broke on me. In a few weeks I had scrapped almost all the clothes I had, and they were few enough, had found the courage of ambitious career-driven desperation to say to my strong-willed mother: "I'm thirty. I've been a dowd all my life, and I'm not going to be a dowd any longer." To which she replied with surprised and surprising meekness, "Quite right too!" And with my friend's assistance I embarked on an orgy of shopping, and discovered in myself a love of clothes that has stayed with me ever since.

In after years, as money became plentiful, some of the lightly happiest hours of my life have been spent at Bradleys, planning with the aid of their friendly and charming staff complete outfits with fox furs to match. Yes, I fortunately always adored matching outfits in silver greys and beige and cream. Fortunately, because my "striking" appearance and figure, which would have been outlandish in bizarre styles or colours, could be impressive, almost handsome in these.

My mother's *chef d'œuvre* in clothes was long remembered—a complete suit of "Etons" for my fourteen-year-old twin. He acquired a clothes sense early, had a very good figure, and at fourteen masterfully demanded an "Eton" suit. My mother borrowed a discarded suit from a family friend made by a well-known "young gentleman's tailor," copied it exactly, quietly transferred the well-known tailor's label to her home-made suit, and my pleasantly vain twin strutted forth, the public school boy to the life, label and all.

My twin brother was always a little man of the world, a man about town, a club man. Even as a schoolboy he had little family or tribal feeling, was always out of the house, went around with a small gang of fellow schoolboys better off than himself (they could hardly have been worse off), but who acknowledged his superior brains, leadership, and personality. And those kind of things remained his fixed desires throughout his life—a man of the world, a socialite, a club man. He had considerable social charm, an interesting, cheerful, very selfish personality, with dash and flair, loved clothes and the exactly perfect turnout.

My youngest brother was a dear little boy. Later on he saved up out of his first earnings—an office boy at fourteen—to buy me a

silver watch, and he used to take me to the threepenny concerts on Saturday nights at the Northampton Institute; very good they were too. The first experience I had of any form of young, friendly, affectionate companionship was with him. We used to go cycling together when we were older, and I missed him greatly when he emigrated to British Columbia at twenty-one. We were, and have remained, exceedingly fond of each other; in many ways he was the nicest character of the four of us.

I remember a few other things about my childhood. I remember the first time I kept, deliberately kept, a promise, made about some trivial thing amongst us children when I was eight years old. It gave me extraordinary moral prestige, which I was much too vain to relinquish. After that I ostentatiously continued to keep my promises, and thereby formed a compulsion which has followed me all my life. I cannot break even a casual half-promise without almost moral agony.

I remember some time about this age I once dreamed I was going to be hanged. I don't know what I could have been reading, probably Charles Reade's "It's Never Too Late to Mend," but I dreamed the whole thing through—the grey execution cell, the days and nights of doom, the last day of horror, even to the incoherent frenzy of the last morning. Fortunately the dream stopped there; I never got as far as the execution shed. But I woke up a determined opponent of capital punishment, and I have been so ever since. Nothing that any human being ever did could justify civilized humanity inflicting such tortures on him as I went through, any more than present-day Anglo-Saxon civilization could find justification for inflicting the tortures of the Middle Ages.

I was given to fairly vivid dreams, product of my omnivorous reading. Once after a day of Fenimore Cooper I dreamed I was in the hands of the Indians. I remember it merely because I woke up crying in terror "Mother! won't you pitch your tent near mine?" which made my mother mildly ban Fenimore Cooper too near bedtime in future.

I remember when I was about nine a young Jew trying to explain to me that all the world hated his race because of something that happened more than eighteen hundred years ago—the Crucifixion—and my repeating it to my mother with an appeal to her invariable common sense: "It can't be true what Sam says, can it? It's so ridiculous!" Mother said it wasn't true.



I remember another thing, having a bow and arrow as a child. The first day I was fascinated by it, and clearly remember thinking, even at the age of nine, with a sense of lasting victory over the fates of boredom, "Now, when I've nothing else to do, I can *always* go and shoot with my bow and arrow." But in a week I noted with thoughtful surprise that I was already tired of shooting with my bow and arrow (it wasn't my kind of sport, anyway; my eyesight was too bad). And ever after I carefully carried that recollection of disillusionment as a warning memory. Until cheerful experience of life told me that there were always—other bows and arrows turning up. (And, anyway, I have also learnt that there is a lot to be said for healthy boredom. Some people like to leave an experience half finished, at its height. I don't. Drain the dregs, weep the last tear, snatch the last kiss, and depart—knowing that you are leaving nothing behind worth staying for. No *arrière-pensée* for me.)

But the thing I forever remember, the two bright white spots that stand out in my childhood, were two visits to Ireland when I was six and seven years old. An Irish aunt took me back with her for several months after an attack of measles or something, and again the next year. She lived in Wicklow and bred smooth-haired fox terriers. Wicklow of the green Murrough and the purple Sugar Loaf Mountain. (I used to wonder why Sugar Loaf because, as a London child, I had never seen sugar except "soft" or in neat square lumps.) My aunt's house backed on to the sea and faced the charming river with its white bridge, yellow sea poppies, and jellyfish on its foreshore. Fifty years later I motored through it—all unchanged, even to my aunt's house and little front garden, where she used to potter among sweet peas and nasturtiums that remained in my childish Cockney memory as the most remarkable exhibits of their kind. When I was in bed at night my aunt used to play the piano downstairs—"Le Premier Base," "Le Pas de Chat," the "Myosotis Waltz," that, like most waltzes, can haunt one nostalgically over half a century. Those two Irish holidays, with their purple mountains and sweet peas and waltzes and beautiful smooth-haired fox terriers galloping round my aunt, remain as two bright white spots in the placid, greyish drab of my childish memories.

## CHAPTER VIII

My education began one morning when I was about five years old. I scribbled some hieroglyphics on a slate, gazed at them with admiration, ran to my mother, and said proudly: "Oh, Mother! doesn't that look just like real writing?" My mother looked at the slate with amusement, and said: "I'll give you your first writing lesson today." And there began my education. And from the age of five to about eleven or twelve my mother taught us, my twin brother and myself, and later my younger brother, writing, reading, elementary arithmetic, history and geography.

My mother's brisk teaching was simple but excellent, founded on the English governesses who had ruled the large schoolroom of her own youth. What a wonderful race those old-fashioned English governesses must have been; what thorough history and geography they taught!

It's odd the casual influences that echo down the years, the generations, the centuries. My mother often spoke of a little nursery-maid called Priscilla Stepney who looked after her when she was a child. And Priscilla Stepney as a child went to the Sunday school taught by a Miss Garrett. My mother used to listen to Priscilla's stories of Miss Garrett and her struggles, as she slowly forged and forced her way into the medical world—the famous first woman doctor, afterwards Mrs. Garrett Anderson. My mother always said her interest in feminism dated from those stories told her by Priscilla, and my own feminism also vaguely dated back to my mother's talk of Priscilla and Mrs. Garrett Anderson.

My mother read aloud to us "Brer Rabbit," "Pilgrim's Progress," Dickens, and similar classics until I was old enough to take over the reading aloud—I, because my twin lagged far behind me in educational achievements. And only then when I was reading aloud did we stop our exhibitionist vying with each other and he contentedly fell into his place as audience. I remember "Bleak House" and "doing" the dying scene of Poor Joe, and my brother's ejaculatory murmur of admiring envy: "Can't she just read!" A compliment cherished for forty-five years with immense satisfaction.

My mother told us that in June 1870, when she was a girl of sixteen, they landed in Southampton from South Africa, and as

they stopped to buy some flowers from a woman in the streets of Southampton the flower-woman looked at her with heavy eyes and said, "Dickens is dead!" and that all England seemed that day to echo that sorrowful cry, "Dickens is dead!"

There were plenty of books in our house, including complete sets of Fenimore Cooper, Dickens, Thackeray, Reade, Kingsley, Scott, and endless numbers of *Harper's Magazine* and the *British Medical Journal*. All through my childhood and teens I used frequently to dive into the *British Medical Journal*, lacking other handy reading matter—I have always been an almost incredibly rapid reader, and to me any print is better than none—and so little, so absolutely nothing did I learn from its dull contents that I was well into my twenties before I grasped the facts of sex.

Every month my father brought home *Harper's Magazine* and any popular fourpenny-halfpenny novels that caught his fancy—he was an inveterate novel-reader, in between Greek, Latin, and Arabic classics. Every month I tore through *Harper's* fiction contents—Margaret Deland, Henry James, Thomas Hardy, Gilbert Parker, Dean Howells, and then the Editor's Easy Chair and the most easily readable of the non-fiction. And to *Harper's* of the nineties, with its two little pictures on its buff covers of the London skyline and St. Paul's, and of the New York skyline and skyscrapers, do I presumably owe my lifelong deep and nostalgic love and longing for the great American scene. When I am away from it I always feel that it is "my" country and "my" people. On occasion when I have been there I have felt more lonely, more surrounded by utter strangers, than anywhere else on earth. But all to no purpose. Once home a word, an accent, wakes the nostalgic longing in me again for my America.

When we were about eleven years old or after we children all went to the cheapest schools my father could find (16s. a term in my case). Mine was a large well-known girls' day-school just above "Board School" level. I didn't fit into this sudden school world, and didn't like it particularly—I was bored by both teachers and pupils. Not only did I completely fail to conform to pattern, but I could not even grasp what the pattern was for little girls in 1896. And, anyway, I was always badly dressed.

It was at this school, I remember, that I suddenly became righteously indignant with the petty teasing and persecution of "Madame," our French teacher. She was a ludicrous disciplinarian;

her classes were always in an uproar of yelling childish laughter and loudly weeping expostulations in broken English from Madame. But at twelve years old and new to school life I decided that there was no need for such senseless unkindness as we pupils showed her. I organized a penny a head collection in my class to make a presentation to Madame as a token of our love and esteem, and I put down the first penny. So sheeplike are human beings that, although I was no popular class leader—quite the contrary—the entire horde of little girls rushed to subscribe their pennies. There was so much money, quite several shillings, that we bought Madame a beautiful purse and had enough over to accompany it with flowers, a pot of musk. I was much too shy to do the presentation myself, and chose a couple of pretty little girls with pretty manners. Madame was overcome with emotion and declared that never to her dying day could she forget it or us. A mistress speaking to us in class afterwards, made a reference to my “generous feeling of protection towards a foreigner in our midst” (I was very gratified), and asked us to show Madame by our behaviour in our French classes in future the devotion we had shown her that day by our gifts. And then Madame and the classes settled down once more to the same noisy teasing and weeping expostulations as before, nor can I remember feeling troubled about it any more. However, Madame got a great thrill out of the presentation, and lovingly tended the pot of musk on the classroom mantelpiece until it faded.

Musk! Pots of musk with their pretty primrose-coloured scented flowers were always around in those days, standing in saucers on window ledges; twopence a pot they cost, and we used to give them to my mother for Christmas and birthdays. I remember a servant giving me two pots of musk on my birthday, and my mother insisting on my giving one pot to my twin brother, who had received sweets from the same maid. I pointed out that he hadn't shared his sweets with me, and my mother firmly replied, “But we always expect girls to be more unselfish than boys.” I gave the musk to my brother, who was quite uninterested in the gift (and, anyway, I should much have preferred his sweets). But that firmly feminine tradition from my mother went on all through my own and my brother's upbringing: “We always expect girls . . .”

And now those little pots of scented musk have disappeared

from the world. In 1916 I saw a casual statement in a newspaper that musk had suddenly lost its scent, everywhere, all over the world, and that scientists were dashing about investigating statements that somewhere in some cottage garden scented musk was still blooming, only to find it a false rumour. I was quite disturbed. It seemed to me an incredible harbinger of impossible stealthy woes to mankind if a plant could simultaneously all over the world be deprived of some physical characteristic, overnight so to speak, inexplicably, without anyone understanding anything about it. The threat implied by such an unknown natural law was more startling in its sinister power than wars. We, mankind, might wake up one morning to find that the same sinister, stealthy natural law had deprived us of speech, of hearing, of anything (or robbed blackbirds of their song!). It wasn't until the next war, however, in 1940, that I worked myself up to investigate the matter. I wrote to several horticultural societies and experts, and they all said yes, it was true, musk had lost its scent all over the world about 1916, and there was no explanation. I went on writing to one expert after another until I received a reply from one of them stating that yes it was true, but:

“The explanation of the musk mystery is so simple that it will never find its way into the popular press. For the excellent reason that there is no mystery in it, and consequently nothing to appeal to the imagination. The fact is that the original musk—*i.e.*, the wild plant—has no scent. A sport appeared in Victorian times with scent, and from this was propagated a scented kind, once so universally in demand. Like all sports, it has reverted to type. I remember Mr. Thomas Hay, who is head of the Royal Gardens, told me that the public will never believe this! I occasionally hear fantastic tales that there is a remote valley in Pembrokeshire where scented musk grows wild.”

I was very relieved at such a simple explanation of what seemed a sinister mystery.

However, to get back to my school life. After a year my father took me away to save the money, and I was quite pleased, even though I casually won a prize. I stayed at home for a year or more; then, when I was about fourteen, I was sent to another school, a very small affair that closed down a little later. I liked it and I wasn't in the least bored, because it had a handsome, intelligent headmistress with whom I fell happily in love. I came in Septem-

ber, and three months later, in the December end-year exams, did so brilliantly that I was awarded a special prize. I remember that morning and the announcement of that special prize. It was the first sensation in my life of pure exalted happiness, ecstasy. As I raced home along the City Road to tell my mother I heard a young woman say to her companion, "Look at that girl's face!" and I knew what she meant—my face was glowing with joy, bliss.

My prize was so unexpected that they had no book ready for me, so I asked for a book on the moon, and they got me one. Someone had once let me look through a telescope at the moon. The sight, the mountains and craters, the cold glare of death, fascinated me.

The following December, twelve months later, after the end-year examinations, my handsome headmistress quietly moved me into a higher class a week before the end of the term. I wondered why, as removals were always made at the beginning of the term—until she read out the list of prize-winners of my old class and remarked after each prize-winner's name, "If Beatrice Holmes had remained in this class she would have received this prize." I had taken all the prizes except the gym. prize. The headmistress had a small school and anxious parents to consider; one pupil taking all the prizes was going to arouse much heartburning. She had removed it by removing me. It seemed to me at the time a most sensible thing to do, and I was very gratified at hearing my name read out so often as the real prize-winner.

Of course, I was still badly dressed and I had no pocket money. I mean none. I walked to school, two miles, walked back, went without lunch because I had no money for the few pence the other girls spent in the school restaurant on buns and milk, and I used to sit in the empty classroom through the lunch hour proudly reading something like Olive Schreiner's "Story of an African Farm," conscious that if I hadn't the money the others had at least I was reading a book well above their heads—and hoping my adored headmistress would notice it and me. She did, but it didn't make any impression on her; she merely noticed me to insist that I ought to have lunch. I said I didn't want any, that I would rather read, that I never took lunch in my life, while proudly flaunting "The Story of an African Farm" ostentatiously under her quite uninterested gaze.

During that year Queen Victoria died. I remember the day of

the funeral and the ejaculation among a group of schoolgirls, "I don't believe people would have stood for it if anyone had appeared in the streets except in black." And a little time before that, in the middle of the Boer War, perhaps the same young arbiters of taste asserted firmly, "Khaki blouses and red, white, and blue ties will be worn everywhere this summer." I was a Pro-Boer because my mother was; she thought the Boer War was terribly unjust. Nobody persecuted me at school for my Pro-Boer opinions, or minded the bit of Transvaal ribbon I pinned on my frock. They merely thought I was silly.

After a year and a half my father took me away from school—money again—and my handsome headmistress was distressed when she learnt that this was to be the end of all schooling for me. She advised me to go in for a pupil-teacher's exam, and gave me special coaching for it, which would enable me to continue my schooling half-time at a North London College free while teaching as a pupil-teacher at an "elementary" school (Board Schools as they were then called) for the other half. I remember still her casual remark, "With your brains you can pass any exam." I passed that exam, although it was a bit above me, chiefly by gaining full marks for an essay on "Paradise Lost" which I had heard read to a higher class and had absorbed while I was doing my exam prep. work at the back of the classroom. For six weeks I attended a North London College in the mornings, hated the mechanical atmosphere, tried pupil-teaching in an infants' class in the afternoons, and hated that. The one memory of my six weeks' teaching is that the class mistress had a terrible squint, and I noted with surprise that a large number of the small children, eights and nines, also squinted. I left, and that at fourteen was the end of my formal schooling—two and a half years, with a break of a year at home in between.

But not the end of my education. Some three or four years later, sick of being at home helping an incredibly efficient mother who received most of my help with a pitying "Lord, child, when I was your age!" I induced my father to lend me four guineas (he stipulated I should pay him back, but I never did) with which to take a course of shorthand and typewriting at Cusack's College in Moorfields. The subjects were thoroughly taught and pupils stayed until they had learnt them thoroughly, in my case ten months, but some went on happily for a couple of years, all for the same inclu-

sive four guineas. The course was a little education in itself, mild cramming in English composition, commercial subjects, business correspondence, and fascinating erratic vistas elsewhere. I can still remember Grote's Essays read out to us as speed practice, and bits about Greek History, Dr. Barnardo's Homes, musical criticisms, etc. Also you could stay until ten o'clock at night practising anything you liked. And here in long happy evenings camouflaged as typing practice I typed my first novel—that is, my first grown-up novel; I had been writing stories and novels for years, but this was my first serious attempt. Thanks, many thanks, to Cusack's College, with its leisurely atmosphere, its thorough teaching, and its legend already created in 1903 by its elderly professors, "The young ladies we are dealing with today are totally inferior in standing and education to the pupils we used to have."

I was still, of course, badly dressed, and I still had practically no pocket money. I remember being with some girls from Cusack's in Cheapside; it was a hot day, and they decided to go into Lyons for lemonade. I refused for all their pressing; I hadn't any money, and I privately wondered how on earth those young millionaires could afford to squander 1½d. on a glass of lemonade and where they got all that money from. By that time I was actually getting 9d. a week pocket money, contributed by my three brothers in return for darning their socks in my spare time. They hadn't many socks, anyway, and one of my few feminine accomplishments was darning. I was—and still could be—one of the world's best darners. But I generally saved that 9d. a week to buy presents for my mother on her birthdays and Christmas presents for the family.

So when, after Cusack's, I eventually got a job as a girl typist and suddenly found myself earning 20s. a week, it was incredible wealth. I instantly gave 5s. a week to my mother to stop her carrying home all the family marketings. The Home and Colonial Stores would deliver the lot if she bought everything there, and the 5s. a week was to cover the slightly extra cost of H. & C. provisions as compared with the open stalls of Chapel Street, Islington, where she shopped. She promised she would, but didn't. She still carried home the marketings and spent the 5s. on extra pots of jam for my brothers.

That was the beginning of the first dim impressions made on my mind of the difficulty of trying to do anything with or for people simply by giving them money. And after thirty years' experience



I would frankly advise anyone to stop trying to be the financial prop of a group who never feel one has given enough—and when one stops giving after exhausting years of generosity show, to one's surprise, perfect capacity to look after themselves. It dries up the milk of human kindness in yourself and the well-spring of independence and considerateness in them. You are there to be asked for everything, received without thanks, taken for granted, or, if you make the slightest demur, to be almost reviled as a criminal.

Sometimes a piece of constructive help—carefully thought out and organized—may put a person or group on its feet. By all means do that, give constructively, but stop the everlasting trickle of financial help that drains your resources and irritates the recipients with what they regard as its insufficiency, and because it is insufficient makes them keep on asking until asking is a deadening habit.

However—to get back to my education, my best education came some years later when I was about twenty-three. An uncle-in-law, a brilliant amateur scientist, a world-wide rover, one of the only two really beautiful men I have ever met, and incidentally a complete failure from a worldly point of view, stayed in London for a couple of years with his wife (my mother's sister of the book-scolding episode of my childhood). He discovered that mathematics and the whole world of science was a closed book to me. He loved teaching, and in the next two years gave me vast glimpses of other worlds than ours through Algebra, Euclid, and the Differential Calculus, interspersed with vivid tales of Majuba Hill in '81, the Klondike in '98, Chief Sitting Bull and the Red Indians, West Africa, Cyprus, Jo'burg in the '80's, etc. He had been in his youth a professional soldier, had three times enlisted in the ranks in England, Canada, and South Africa, and each time had won his commission—and ranker officers were rare in those days.

My uncle told me lots of interesting things. I remember his telling me that after watching some Red Indians in Canada cavorting about in the snow naked, he asked them how they could endure the cold. They told him that they were so hardened to exposure that their bodies were "all face," meaning that civilized people walk about with "naked" faces and don't feel the exposure because their faces are hardened to it.

He told me also a stark incident of an Indian "brave" who failed in his tribal initiation exercises—tests of grim endurance—

and of seeing him take his place among the women water-carriers, for ever outcast by tribal law.

He told me of the speech-clicks of the Bushmen in South Africa, and that he once took some snapshots of a very primitive tribe who, when he showed them the pictures of themselves, could make nothing of them. To them they were just splotches of black and white—like showing a dog or a cat a picture of a dog or a cat.

He told me also that when he was a Judge in Cyprus he had accused and accuser arraigned before him in a murder trial, and he said: "One man was innocent and the other guilty, but I hanged them both—and thereby finally ended a vendetta between two families."

My uncle announced that I had a brilliant mathematical mind, and under his brilliant tuition I certainly found mathematics fascinating. Mathematics take you right out of this world into a realm of disembodied thought, and perhaps the cold ardour a mathematical formula can induce is the most exalted form of mental ecstasy.

I remember that my uncle told me it was almost impossible for the finite mind to comprehend infinity. I said I could comprehend infinity by taking the proposition that decimal nine recurring if taken to infinity equals one. He said chasing the odd bit baffled people—you were always that bit short of the whole one. I said not if you went to infinity and came back with all the odd bits there were—if you were short, well, add some more. You'd got an infinite number of odd bits, so obviously decimal nine recurring if taken to infinity must equal one. That pleased him.

On another occasion we were roving over, I think, Thomson's electron theory and testing a few of the negative and positive atomic formulas, and I discovered one that seemed to me to contain a mathematical error. And my uncle checked over my excited figures and thoughtfully agreed. We debated whether we ought to inform Professor Thomson, but let it slide, feeling that the joy of discovery was enough. Another thrill was the terrific legend that if you worked out the formula for the hyperbolic curve to infinity (don't blame me if this sounds rubbish—it's nearly forty years ago) *it comes back*; you'd see the back of your own head, so to speak. This was an exciting, hair-raising thought. I stared at my uncle as if he was telling me a ghost story.

My uncle also made me read Jevons' "Principles of Science." It

was to me almost a revelation. It teaches one how to think. I remember the impression made upon me by Jevons' simple example of the rigid laws of chance—the tossing of a penny to infinity with the rigid certainty that heads and tails would be, must be, exactly 50-50. Any other result would not be chance, but bias on one side of the penny or the other. Again, Jevons' insistence on the laws of argument, "first define what you are arguing about." To this day I never listen to people, including myself, happily arguing almost to infinity about philosophy, religion, or what not without remembering Jevons and realizing that we are all using the same words for quite different meanings. These things may seem quite commonplace to other generations of excellent secondary schools and perhaps universities. But to me—I had read Kant, Comte, and Carlyle, published a novel, and gained a comprehension of business without ever catching a glimpse before of the scaffolding of thought, mental processes, fundamental laws.

How exciting it all was! And then my uncle went back to Canada after giving me two years' teaching which I told him were equivalent to a university education. And I haven't looked at mathematics since, except to work out investment yields.

Years after—oh, thirty years after—I tried to "pay back." But it wasn't very successful. I remember my cheerfully cynical twin brother telling me at the start: "This generous gesture business never works. Why bother?"

We had lost touch with my uncle, always a wanderer over the face of the earth, for many years, and then learnt that he was very poor and very old, alone with a sick wife in Vancouver. He had written his autobiography, wanted to see it in print, and no publisher would look at it. He was a brilliant talker—and a deadly dull writer. I got the MS. from him, professed great enthusiasm for it, sent him a cheque for £100, and paid a London publisher another £150 to get it published with his photo as a frontispiece. His joy was great when he received his copies, and when, with the aid of a kindly friend of mine, a very appreciative three-quarter column review appeared in the *Times Literary Supplement* from a critic who "saw" the Old-Timer's story under the dull prose, my uncle touched the stars.

But unfortunately his wife died, and he immediately took ship to England, over eighty, convinced that he was a best-seller coming to receive the plaudits of the crowd and the proceeds of vast sales—

incredible, lifelong optimism was always one of his failings. Of course there were no sales. And he died a year or so after, as he had lived, a disappointed man. So the attempt I had made to pay back wasn't a success.

That's life. You receive from A. You very rarely can adequately pay back to A. Instead, you find yourself giving to B and C, and then probably D comes along and makes a generous gesture to you out of the blue which you have done nothing to deserve, and for which you can make no return. You receive, and you repay to others, and still others give again to you; so goes the circle. But that receiving from D out of the blue—what a lovely glow of gratitude it kindles in the soul! A sense of the undeserved miracle.

## CHAPTER IX

AFTER Cusack's and with difficulty I landed a job. I say, with difficulty, because my first job (a copying office kept by two elderly ladies) I held only for a fortnight and was then dismissed as incompetent. I shall never forget that day; fortunately it was raining hard and I was able to hide under an umbrella the tears that were streaming down my face all the way home. At home my mother tried to console me, and assured me that I would make a very competent office worker as soon as I found my feet.

I was nineteen then, and that was the first of certain periods—about five all told—of grey and sometimes prolonged depression in my life due to some definite but probably exaggerated cause, when I felt that I should never know happiness again. During that particular period I saw myself for ever "out of work"—oh! that nightmare!—and ending irrevocably in the workhouse. Even this book is being written as an escape from such a depression. A series of crises, troubles, worries, conflicts, disappointments, surround my life at the moment, affecting every angle of it, and I do not see how I can surmount any of them, or ever look forward to any form of happiness or serenity again. And I am trying to write myself out of this depression, gaining tiny periods of oblivion as I write. Part of my present depression is probably due to that sense of death of the heart that this war has brought to many of my age. We saw the

1914 war through in our thirties, and that was that—but now another war!

Many people are subject to these black or grey periods when circumstances seem—as they seem to me now—overwhelming in their utter unrelieved misery (and what orgies of self-depreciation one goes through in these periods!). I wish I could tell those others anything that would help. I can only say: “Keep on doing everything that you’ve got to do or ought to do or can do, even if it seems just making futile gestures in the dark.” Any brave things I have ever done in my life have seldom been done with any sense of high courage, but generally out of a sense of panic. No matter how bad things are, the *idea* of courage is the first asset to clutch at and the last asset to let go. No matter how badly frightened you are, go through the motions of courage, even though it’s coward’s courage. Remember Emerson’s “There’s safety in valour.”

And, of course, one wins through. In the past long and lovely periods of happiness and serenity have come to me again, far outweighing the few months—in one case, several years—of unhappiness.

However, a month or two later, after that ignominious dismissal, I got my first real job as a girl typist at £1 a week. A Cusack’s College friend of mine and I both applied for it. She got it. As she had already landed a similar job elsewhere, she strongly recommended me. Our prospective employer was a middle-aged Dane, newly arrived from Newcastle to open a London office for his firm—the largest exporters of eggs in Denmark—and shyly bewildered at this his first attempt to interview and engage a “young lady.” In 1904 women were still unknown in many offices. He took me, not on my merits, but rather than go through the ordeal of interviewing more young ladies. And in that London office of Mr. L. C. Ravens, representing the Odense Aegforretning, Odense, Denmark, I began my business career, and in Mr. Ravens I made my first and lifelong business friend.

I began my career quite well. I was told to begin my duties on Monday morning, March 23rd, 1904, at 9 a.m. I arrived at ten to nine before a locked door. On the door was painted the name of the Danish firm and the names and addresses of the principal provincial agents. I realized immediately they were bound to occur very often in my work, and I memorized them there and then.

Half an hour later, when Mr. Ravens dictated his first letter to me—my first real business letter in my business life—he started to spell the long Danish name to me, and I had the satisfaction of glibly saying, “It’s all right—I saw it on the door.” I took his letters down in shorthand and wrote them out in longhand; many offices had no typewriters in those days. My writing was so bad that within a couple of weeks he had resignedly purchased a typewriter for me.

It was an interesting job, at any rate to me, because business interested me from the word “Go.” We imported millions of Danish eggs into the British Isles, most of them sold before landing through a team of agents all over the United Kingdom. Sometimes in dull times a heavy consignment would arrive unsold, and we had to sell them at a concession in price to big firms like Maypole and Sainsbury, or, in desperation, in order to clear the consignment, “slaughter to the Jews,” which was the trade expression for selling at a very low price to the Whitechapel shopkeepers. The great thing was to sell consignments at top speed. Eggs won’t keep and cold storage charges were heavy.

We and Odense fixed the price of our “Cock” Brand every Friday, often amid cursings from other importers and dealers because our price—we were the premier firm and the premier brand—ruled the market. We were premier because at that time our packing, grading, and quality were admittedly the best. “As good as Cock brand” was the highest praise for their own brands our competitors dared make. Our agencies were much sought after and our agents the best, some of them brilliant.

Shall I ever forget the great J. E. Bonwell, almost a legend in the provincial trade! A huge red-headed Yorkshireman with a laugh that literally shook the windows—I have heard them rattle—and some sort of overpowering influence—“*my* personality” he used to call it proudly—that could induce the biggest and most wary buyers in the trade to sign their names almost blindly to long-term contracts for fresh and pickled eggs. Bonwell and his contracts—he used to run in on us every few months, office vibrating to his booming voice, waving a sheaf of contracts, some of them trespassing on other agents’ territories, and insist that he and only he, with his unique personality, could have got them (probably right), and that only he was entitled to commission on them.

He had a huge handwriting and used to write us long letters in

which he was always "building the arch" or "placing the keystone" or "crowning my life's achievements" which would make himself and Odense world-famous. Or else, when his hypnotized buyers got stuck with eggs they couldn't sell, "saving my customers from the vortex" or "swimming the stream with them" or "plunging in and bringing them safe to land." Which meant re-selling the superfluity of eggs elsewhere and demanding a second commission on them.

He was a wealthy man, always talking about his income tax, and such talk meant great wealth in 1904; but no wealth could have covered the vastness of his imaginary shooting moors and salmon fishing and manorial halls, to which, with magnificent gestures, he was always inviting his customers. They never went. "The dear old kisser! He wouldn't be at home if I did come," they said affectionately. They were shrewd enough to laugh over him behind his back, but enjoyed his sales raids on them as they enjoyed a colourful drama.

His territory was Yorkshire technically, but actually he raided any territory that was showing sales resistance to the famous "Cock" brand. If he went the round of the big London buyers, trade etiquette required that our London traveller should go with him—to the door, but, with Bonwell, not inside the door. (And let me tell you trade etiquette, business etiquette, is a fearsome thing. The business world may conduct its struggles on the basis of savage tribal warfare, but it is warfare accompanied by the most rigid tribal etiquette and taboos.) At the door J. E. used seriously to take off his huge Yorkshire overcoat and hand it to the traveller to hold for him, take off his gloves and hand those to the traveller, and thus gloriously attired in frock coat and silk hat, red rose in his button hole and cigar in his mouth, in he would march—and come out with the usual contract.

My first stern test in business life came within a few months of starting. Mr. Ravens went down with quinsy, too ill even to talk on the telephone. I was faced with falling markets, and a consignment unsold arriving at Harwich to be cleared at the best prices I could get. A prominent Tooley Street firm, because they had only an inexperienced girl typist to deal with, joyously considered they should get them at rather less than best. They held out for their price, I held out for mine; they optimistically sold at their price, and I refused to deliver the necessary shipping documents under

my price. I won; they paid my price, breathing curses at me. They complained to Mr. Ravens that I had taken advantage of my brief authority and my inexperience to enforce a price not warranted by the falling market. Mr. Ravens laughed even in the middle of his quinsy and upheld me. They were the sharpest firm in the Street, and they complained that they had been cornered by a girl of nineteen! Looking back on it, I think they were about half right, but experience shouldn't have sold short against inexperience.

I remained in Tooley Street with Mr. Ravens for eight years, and found the work always interesting: handling bills of lading and shipping documents, neatly dividing up consignments arriving at different ports all over the Kingdom—Harwich, Hull, Grimsby, Newcastle, Leith, and so on—and despatching them to their various destinations. Watching the always fascinating rise and fall of markets, watching the changes of trade, noticing the first influx of Irish eggs (in these days always badly packed and graded) and the first trickle of Chinese and other eggs. And, most interesting of all, watching the beginnings of the Co-operative movement in Denmark, under the name of Dansk-Andels, which, towards the end of my eight years in Tooley Street, gave Odense their first real competition, and finally, many years later, became almost as large as Odense. It was all a picture of one small section of the capitalist world. Dansk-Andels were fortunate inasmuch as private enterprise, Odense, had for many years preceded their birth, established the Danish export trade, built up a first-class reputation for quality and service in the form of branding, packing, and reliable deliveries. The Danish farmers wrested their farms, eggs, butter and bacon from the sandy sea soil itself; Odense established their huge export trade for private profit; the farmers saw to it that they got good prices; and then the Co-operative movement was formed to give the farmers better prices—which sometimes it did and sometimes it didn't—and up to the outbreak of the 1914 war the two systems flourished side by side, the farmers having the advantage of both systems.

I liked my eight years in Tooley Street. I liked the wholesale produce trade. I was always interested in the mechanics of the trade and its personalities. The "Street men" who came in and out of the office to argue prices unavailingly with the imperturbable and inflexible Mr. Ravens, sandwiched between trade gossip and chat about the "big men"—the Peek Frean, Sainsbury, Maypole



Dairy, and Huntley and Palmer magnates, the East End provision men, foreigners and Jews generally, who furtively slid into the office, looking like anarchists, to plead passionately for a concession in price, always ready in the middle of business to break into a glowing account of their wives and families, their children's schooling and their brilliant educational achievements. Their educational achievements! How those foreigners, poor, most of them born in some far-off foreign Ghetto, appreciated the educational opportunities of this country! All their hopes and fears and ambitions, joys and sorrows, were centred round their children, and I remember having to break off my typing hastily on one occasion to try to comfort one poor weeping father who had just lost his little son, while Mr. Ravens looked on in embarrassed silence.

Long before the end of my eight years I was handling all the correspondence on my own initiative. Probably my greatest compliment was paid me after I left by a traveller who remarked, "Miss Holmes was the only real typist we ever had. When you put a letter on her desk to answer, it *was* answered." I had also taken over the management of the team of agents, though, as this was also by correspondence, they didn't know they were being managed by the girl typist, except that letters from the London headquarters began to breathe a spirit of praise and appreciation they were quite unaccustomed to. Mr. Ravens never praised; he considered it sufficient praise to abstain from blame.

Incidentally, we had tried for years to open an account with Huntley and Palmer, even turning the great J. E. Bonwell on to them, but without success. I was very proud of the fact that it was a "sales letter" concocted by myself, pointing out in forceful words that the high price of "Cock" brand was more than compensated for by the perfect quality, size, saving in shells and labour, etc., that brought a trial order from them. "Other famous biscuit firms tell us that 'eighteen-pound "Cocks" are cheapest in the end,'" I emphasized. It was true, and, young salesman though I was, I realized the effect of the "personal testimony" statement.

Mr. Ravens, my first boss, was an interesting chief to get experience under. A quiet Danish gentleman, hard as steel under his gentle exterior, he won respect without liking throughout the trade. Respect, because he was so completely a man of his promise, of his word, of his bargain—these things in a trade of which its leading weekly journal remarked bitterly: "Solomon said in his

haste all men are liars. Had he lived in the egg trade he could have said it at his leisure." Without liking, because his bargains never had even the shadow of compromise. The Dictator of the egg trade, he wrung the last farthing out of buyers and agents alike. And all for a quite modest salary and no commission or profit-sharing from the Odense House in Denmark. Steel and ice where his employers' interests were concerned, he was extremely sensitive and incapable of bargaining on behalf of his own interests. He spent a lifetime building up the Odense Brand—in fact, the whole Danish trade—and saw his employers become millionaires while he and his wife faced an old age of barely modest comfort.

Many years later, in his sixties, he suddenly backed our financial Corporation in 1920 with half his small savings (I did not know that alarming proportion at the time), with his 1904 £1 a week typist as one of its Joint Managing Directors, flourished exceedingly as our sleeping partner, and his last comfortably affluent twenty years were the happiest of his life. This is quite out of chronological order, but I might just as well complete his quiet story at one telling.

## CHAPTER X

DURING my eight years in Tooley Street I had slowly risen from £1 to £2 a week, but could get no further. The same narrow outlook in Odense, the Danish headquarters, that kept Mr. Ravens all his life on a salary quite inadequate for services rendered held up their hands in horror at more than £2 a week for a woman. And as I wanted £2 5s. I finally left.

I should probably have left several years earlier, but I wanted to visit America.

I was about twenty-four when I felt I really could not go on any more without some real prospect of visiting America. So I arranged with Mr. Ravens that I went without my fortnight's holiday for four years and took two months in the fourth year. Which I did. I was earning between 35s. and £2 a week during those years, keeping my mother as well as myself, and was a responsible householder paying rent and taxes (£27 per annum). Of course it meant

hard saving, but it was worth it. For four years I went without lunch or food of any sort from 8 o'clock in the morning until my 7 o'clock evening meal (which was always a good one—my mother saw to that). And I spent nothing on anything that could be done without. But as I never had had anything to spend, I can't say I felt the hardship. And at the end of four years I had £100, helped by the £25 down for my novel, which had found a publisher quite easily. The first publisher I sent it to took it.

What was the novel like? Oh, good of its kind for those days and tastes. Written in my late teens, it was very derivative, a mixture of "The Story of an African Farm" (Olive Schreiner), "David Grieve" (Mrs. Humphry Ward), and "Trilby" (du Maurier). But it had original thought in it, sold about 2,000 to 3,000 copies, and the critics praised what one of them called "the big brush beauty" of my style, while a famous critic wrote to me a special letter of encouragement. I remember that another critic considered my "construction" poor. Well, one of the happy facts in writing this biography is that I haven't had to bother about construction. What has been has been. Life has already done the construction.

My American trip was not the first time I had travelled. I had already had a series of Continental holidays, mostly of the week-end type, all my money would run to for two people. As I have said, when I was seventeen my mother and I went to Bruges on £4 10s. for the two of us for a fortnight "door to door." I don't know where we got the money from. And for ever after Bruges has enshrined all the loveliness and excitingness of "foreign travel" to me. Its belfry, its carillon, its canals, its vistas, its bridges, its streets, its food. And thank goodness—writing this in 1941 when everything on the Continent seems as cut off from one as if it were drowned!—I had sense enough to recognize my ideal when I saw it. And for ever after I went back to Bruges for a day or two almost yearly: flying visits *en route* to and from everywhere in my hectic business years, long detours to drop in at Bruges in my gorgeous motoring years. Its carillon is always in one's ears, brought back by sudden nostalgic echoes.

Later we had a week-end in Paris, in Holland (fourth class and steerage), and—chief triumph—a fortnight in Spain that cost us £10, but my mathematical uncle and his wife were our hosts. Spain, Barcelona and its Ramblas, seemed to me a land of Eastern Moorish romance, and the dusty stunted palms of the Paseo de

Colon a Garden of Allah in themselves. That was in 1906, and then in 1907 I made the arrangement with Mr. Ravens regarding America, and I settled down to no more holidays for four years.

So, in 1911, my mother and I went to America on £100, taking second-class cabins on the old *Baltic* (incredibly luxurious it seemed to my frugal experience) from Liverpool to New York. From New York we went by steamboat up the river to Albany, from Albany to Buffalo, Chicago, Niagara Falls, and Toronto; then homeward via Montreal and Quebec to Glasgow, Edinburgh, and across to Belfast for a final week with an Irish aunt, winding up in London with ten shillings left out of the £100.

And the trip that I joyfully planned in detail many times over in the four years of waiting, snatching at advice and recommendations from people who had actually been to my America, proved to be all that I had hoped. It all looked as I dreamed and expected. That was the satisfying part of it. I had read *Harper's Magazine* and all kinds of other Americana (including Elbert Hubbard's Little Books) for so long that my visit was like coming home to a well-beloved scene. We knew no one. We put up contentedly at the cheapest rooming houses we could find, ate at Childs' with satisfaction—the Childs' of the piles of golden oranges in the white windows—and the American scene seemed to me, then and for ever, deeply satisfying. Why didn't I emigrate? Because I had my mother to support and I had formed the opinion that to be penniless, friendless, jobless, homeless in a strange country might be terrible. And I've never seen cause to change that opinion. Certainly not as regards America, where one of the grim facts, frightening to my "workhouse" complex, is the rapidity with which people change their jobs—and jobs change their people.

What did I think of the American scene? I didn't know then and I don't know now whether it is a better or worse kind of civilization than we have in Europe. But I do know that it is a different civilization—as different from Europe as Egypt was different from Rome. Americans and British are apt to look upon each other as "just like ourselves" because we speak the same language. And we feel mutual confusion because the same familiar words express totally different mental and emotional reactions. Outlook, habits of mind and of life, customs, etiquette, manners can be and are all so bewilderingly different. The truth is that America is a foreign country speaking the same language as ourselves. If she spoke a

foreign tongue we should probably be able to understand her more easily. We should expect differences instead of expecting likenesses.

I mentally realize the differences, but have never felt them emotionally. I have been in America some eight or nine times, for short periods only, as a tourist, as a guest, as a speaker, but I always feel happy in that country with a fundamental contentment and satisfaction. Probably quite early in my childhood I made some sort of romantic and emotional crystallization of America as the land of my dreams, and have never been able or wanted to break that emotional spell since, contain what it may of illusion and idealization. America to me has been like some fair and far beloved mistress, faults mentally realized, emotionally denied.

On the other hand, my love for America has never extended to American business methods. About Wall Street I am a cynical realist. In giving friends on this side business introductions to the U.S.A. I always bluntly warn them, "Get a first-class lawyer. See that your contracts with your American connections are as water-tight as legal ingenuity can make them, and then remember those contracts will be broken the moment it suits the other side to break them." Contracts in America, even with first-class houses, can be not worth the paper they are written on in unfavourable circumstances. You may be able to force them to fulfil the letter of the contract, but the spirit of the contract is an expression that can have almost no meaning to them.

However, Wall Street and American business methods are getting better. I have had experience of them from 1912 to 1942, and some of the "barbarism has been taken out of business," to use Roosevelt's expression. Or, in other words, the American business community is growing up, fighting-frontier methods are being discarded, tradition is forming, reputations are being cherished. The last bloody capitalist extant on the American Continent will doubtless be a model figure when that time arrives.

But, of course, Wall Street has little fundamental part in the great American scene. Disraeli in 1863 said: "There is a grave misapprehension as to what constitutes the true meaning of American democracy. The American democracy is not made up of the scum of the great industrial cities of the United States, nor an exhausted middle class that speculates in stocks and calls that progress. The American democracy is made up of something that may

ultimately decide the fate of the two Americas and of Europe." Disraeli said it.

Again, there are certain aspects of the American social scene that must appeal to us as sheer caricature. Mrs. Emily Post, for instance, and all that she stands for—which is the almost incredible anxiety openly shown by Americans of all social grades "to conform," to commit no social solecism, the terror of the most trivial social *faux pas*, the abject slavery to the small minutiae of social observance. They, of course, find the same appeal of caricature in our caste, class, and "county" systems, as witness the book that delighted us all, "With Malice Towards Some." But since American idiosyncrasy, seen through the distorting mirror of its enormous numbers and huge scene, can create the effect of the grotesque, so could an even more amusing book be written about the permeation of the Mrs. Emily Post consciousness through every aspect of the American social scene. But it wouldn't delight them, and, therefore, it would be cruel to do it. We are complacently satisfied with the shortcomings of our social code, Americans have an inferiority complex over theirs, both attitudes being meaningless, since manners and mannerisms are not touchstones of value, whether British, American, or Chinese. But the point remains that their criticisms can't hurt us, ours can cut them. This is why Americans are so intensely sensitive to all forms of British criticism.

We are not a touchy nation, as nations go, whereas the Americans are a supersensitive nation. Those two extremes alone indicate the unlikeness of the British and American peoples. We, wrapped in a self-complacency that is a byword among nations, appear outwardly imperturbable, unruffled, and indifferent amid unflattering events and criticisms which in America produce noise, heat, and excitement. Some of these unlikenesses may be superficial. The American writer who describes the British as "that sensitive, rugged and reticent people" may have given in six words as true a summary of us as any. And as long ago as the Civil War the London *Times* may have worded a similar truth when it remarked, "We have continually pointed out to our readers that the most vocal portion of the American people are not the portion that rules its destinies."

## CHAPTER XI

WHEN I came back from America I returned to Mr. Ravens' office and started to look for another job at that ambitious £2 5s. a week. But before going on with my career story I want to say a little about my life, my adult life, outside the office—and the interests and influences of that adult life.

One of those influences was "the Association." The first time I ever belonged to anything, my first small experience of organization and committee work, was when I was asked to join the newly formed Association of Shorthand Writers and Typists, subsequently re-christened the Association of Women Clerks and Secretaries. In 1904 a few far-sighted women, clerical workers themselves, Miss Florence, Miss Ruth Young, Miss Maddock, Miss Charlesworth, looked at the growing hordes of girls pouring into offices—all, of course, in lowly clerical positions—and felt it was time to organize this new array. I joined and was put on the committee. I remember those first meetings in a member's bed-sitting room; some of us sat on the bed, a couple sat on the table, and another one sat on a coal scuttle. Six years later, at our best we numbered only about 200 members, including two kindly men (in those days our Association was open to men). My! it was hard going. It is always hard to get human beings to organize, and harder still when the human beings are young women from "nice homes" who regard organization as synonymous with trade-unionism, then hardly respectable. But our members included Elizabeth Baker, a typist, whose fine play "Chains" made a sensation; myself, who had just published a well-spoken-of novel; and other up and coming young women.

We felt, however, that almost our greatest claim to glory was Miss Fitzgerald, who was reputed to be earning £4 a week at one of London's smartest hotels as their foreign correspondent. She was an extremely competent and attractive Irishwoman with many languages, a university degree, and social background. She had fought her employers to a standstill for £4 a week and got it. But we used to look at her and wonder what it felt like to be earning £4 a week.

We, our Association, held small public meetings to discuss topics of interest—which the Press ignored except for one meeting

on "Office Dress for Women," when we had fifteen reporters hanging on our words. Bernard Shaw—red-bearded in those days—addressed one meeting, but as usual I was too shy to come forward and be introduced, and so missed the only opportunity I've ever had of shaking the great Irishman by the hand.

We had a mutually helpful liaison with the Women's Civil Service organization of that day, and when the Insurance Act was first mooted we made persistent representations regarding that almost unheard of thing, the women's point of view, to Mr. Lloyd George's Government.

When the Insurance Act was actually introduced, we committee members were by that time experts on it, and we arranged meetings to explain its terms to women. Then came the moment when Miss Florence, our leader, said that unless our little Association could raise the costs of turning ourselves into a legally recognized entity and from that into an Approved Society for Women we would have to go out of existence. "I estimate it will cost £50," she said in her precise Scottish accents. She might just as well have said £1,000, so large did it seem to us, who had probably none of us ever seen £50. However, some of us were Suffragettes, and we held a meeting of our members, in which I led the way in raising funds in the style of Mrs. Pankhurst. We raised £25 there and then (both the kindly men contributed, although we had reluctantly to part with them that night). And the other £25 we gained by letter-writing—my first experience of raising funds by sales letters. My most valuable aid came from a woman who wrote offering £2 provided we raised the remaining £48. That type of offer makes a splendid basis for mail-order campaigns. People will always give if they hear other people are giving and if more than its own value (a premium) is attached to their gift.

The result was that in 1912, when the Insurance Act came into force, we were one of the few women's organizations able to turn ourselves into an Approved Society, and the Association of Women Clerks and Secretaries is now a very influential body of many thousand members.

During those years I joined the Suffragettes, but I didn't have time to do much beyond selling the Suffragette paper in the streets occasionally, generally outside Westminster, wearing the badge all day and every day in the City, not the easiest thing to do, going to the gorgeous Pankhurst meetings and contributing my financial



mite, putting up members coming to London for the splendidly organized processions we all walked in, and so forth. I saw Christabel several times in the office when I went to deliver money and unsold papers. At one of the big Suffragette Fairs the figure that impressed me most was Henry W. Nevinson, whose books I admired and whose Cocoa articles I had read aloud to the family from *Harper's Magazine* years before.

But that Suffragette movement helped to make the women of my generation. It gave us pride of sex, helped to stop the everlasting apology within us for being women, taught us to value ourselves and our abilities, and taught us to fight for those valuations in terms of pay and responsibility, public and private.

Years after, twenty years after, I wrote to Mrs. Pankhurst anonymously, through an intermediary, told her all I owed her, and asked her to accept a small annuity from me—I had heard she was financially not well off—which I sent her every six months in banknotes. She sent me the kindest letter—which, of course, I destroyed, instead of keeping as a treasured memento; I have never had any sense of possession. And about a year or two later she died. I made it anonymous because I didn't want her to thank me. She and all those women in that movement had opened out the world for me, and all one could offer in return was a little money years after.

The Association and the Suffragette movement were my public interests. But my absorbing personal interests were books, always books, and then music and theatres and plays. Books have meant everything to me all my life, from inspiration to escape. The first book that made a profound impression on me was Olive Schreiner's "Story of an African Farm." I was about eleven years old, and by the time I was fourteen I knew that African Farm by heart and had almost brought myself up on that book. It coloured all my ideas of literature (I still think its style one form of perfection), of life, of religion, of men and women, particularly women.

In my early teens I used to get up every morning at six o'clock and read Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason," Comte, Rousseau, John Stuart Mill, Carlyle (oh, lovely!), Tyndale's Essays, Locke. I can't remember what I thought of most of them. I can remember thoroughly disapproving of Kant's style. I early developed a sense of style, and cannot now read anything with interest, however worthy, unless the style satisfies me.

One of the writers who made the greatest impression upon my young twenties onwards was George Gissing. The beautiful austerity of his writing, the sorrowful nobility of his philosophy. Gissing's whole conception of life, grey, threatening, always some calamity looming ahead, found secret confirmation in my worst fears, my calamity complex. It wasn't my life as I most fortunately found it, thank goodness, but it was life as I secretly feared at any moment it might become. The intense sensitivity of his characters, their pitiful entanglement with the sordid everyday difficulties of life, their tragic problems of income, food, some attic lodging, some squalid shelter from the storm of life, touched me deeply.

One is haunted, too, by Gissing's nostalgia for the Grecian and Roman conception of life, or rather that vision of past bright worlds and golden ages that was Gissing's escape from his own life and age.

His is unequal writing, but at its best—what memorable passages! Those last lines of "The Nether World" that pierce like the light of a star through the sombre dark of the story:

"Unmarked, unencouraged, save by their love of uprightness and mercy, they stood by the side of those more hapless, brought some comfort to hearts less courageous than their own. Where they abode it was not all dark. Sorrow certainly awaited them, perchance defeat in even the humble aims they had set themselves, but at least their lives would remain a protest against those brute forces of society which fill with wreck the abysses of the nether world."

I am perhaps one of the few people who have a complete collection of Gissing, gathered with difficulty in all kinds of second-hand volumes. Complete, except for one book, his first, "Workers in the Dawn"—and I spent half a dozen Saturdays reading that in the British Museum. Once on one of my motoring trips I stopped at St. Jean de Luz, knowing that Gissing was buried in the English churchyard there, but I failed to find the spot in the time available.

Then Ruskin's "Modern Painters"—there's spellbinding richness for you, an entire philosophy of life and beauty. Who can forget his description of the Roman *campagna* at evening: "The red light rests like dying fire on defiled altars. . . . From the plain to the mountains, the shattered aqueducts, pier upon pier, melt into the darkness, like shadowy and countless troupes of funeral mourners, passing from a nation's grave." My God! What writing! The lift and fall of the cadences!

In fact, I have almost a theory that a perfect education for all children after the three R's would be a thorough grounding in Jevons' "Principles of Science," Wells' "Outline of History," and Ruskin's "Modern Painters." Such an education would teach them how to think, and then teach them what to think about—in terms of the past, present, and future, life, death, and the hereafter.

Again, I like the zestful appreciations that grow on one with age. When I was young Trollope used to bore me; now one of my many versions of heaven would be reading (in bed) an unending series of Anthony Trollope. Such demure, restrained, yet exquisite characterization. Every character, major and minor, playing so completely and squarely in the middle of their part. And how attached one becomes to some of them, to Planty Pal—Mr. Plantagenet Palliser, eventually Prime Minister of England, and finally, amid his groans, Duke of Omnium. How fascinating his slight lapse with the enigmatic Lady Dumbello, née Griselda Grantly!

(A City bookseller once pointed out to me that another favourite of mine, Archibald Marshall, in the Clinton Series, was a modern Trollope, in spite of the very uneven quality of his output.)

And one of the beauties of Trollope is that the moment one has finished "the set," one can comfortably begin all over again, because one never remembers what their fascinating contents were all about.

Reading novels is no more escapism than reading the Bible or Boswell or Carl Sandberg's "Life of Lincoln" in four volumes, which was my absorbing form of escape during that horrible winter of 1939-40, when all the time one felt one was crying and weeping inwardly. The word is meaningless. Escape from is escape to. In the latter sense we should all be escapists, ourselves and the world individually and collectively, escaping all the time to better things—unless we think everything is perfect as it is. When a human being has lost the desire to escape—to better things—he has lost youth. He has given up hope. Escapism is another word for hope. When Pope said "Hope springs eternal in the human breast" he was just voicing a slogan for all escapists. Don't be deprecating about being an escapist; just see that you get the most thrilling forms of escape that you can.

Another of my interests was music. I remember when I was six realizing the charms of music—Christmas Carols outside 266 City Road—and remarking gravely to my mother, "I shall be glad

when Christmas comes again, not because of the presents and sweets, but because of the music"—two blowsy men with cornets outside the Eagle public house.

But I was about twenty-four when the revelation of music came to me, by accident, as in later life so many other revelations of beauty have come to me. We acquired a brother-in-law who was a talented amateur musician. We had a grand piano, he hadn't, and with the simple egotism of near genius Charlie used to march into our little house in Chiswick every evening and make the place ring with his Beethoven, Mozart, Bach, Chopin, Liszt—themes played and practised, bar by bar, over and over again. How we hated it and Charlie for forcing himself and his maddening, dreary classical practising on us! Waltzes, yes; popular songs, yes. And, occasionally, a Rachmaninoff Prelude or a Chopin Nocturne, yes. But those dreary hours and hours of tuneless thumping! Of course in the end we grew used to it, then fascinated by it, and then, with months of themes ringing in our ears, blissfully critical.

Only when one has heard the *Appassionata*, the "Waldstein," the "Hammerclavia," hammered out note by note a hundred times over does even the most ignorant person appreciate their minutely beautiful structure, learn to know them so that for ever after one bar caught on the poorest radio makes one's heart sing with recognition. And when a year or so later Charlie's father gave him a grand piano, and Charlie forsook us in one night, again with complete egotism because his new grand piano was better than our old one, we starved for music, and could have killed Charlie and his father.

Incidentally, Charlie was the other one of the only two really beautiful men I have ever met. I have two or three times met masculine and feminine beauty that could only be described by a hackneyed phrase, "As beautiful as a Greek God!" Charlie and my mathematical uncle were exactly that; and Charlie seated at the piano playing Beethoven was a sight for the gods. I have also an American friend who is "as lovely as a Botticelli." Just that.

The theatre, plays, good plays, from the early "Voysey Inheritance" to the modern "Thunder Rock," have always given me fine forms of escape and inspiration. (Oh yes, and just now Masefield's petrifying "Nan!" Jealousy, greed, fate, cold justice, and charity—and Pauline Letts with her pale beauty as the outraged human heart!) Dating from those remarkable Court Theatre years, Ber-

nard Shaw has always been to me, and still is, our greatest modern playwright from "Candida" to "Geneva." And other plays—Maeterlinck's strange, dark "Tintagel," Strindberg, Chekov. Of course my aggressive character prefers Strindberg, those violent, virulent plays of violent, virulent hatreds, but all so hearty that to me they're stimulating instead of depressing. Those characters hating each other with such virulent hatred that it's quite a relief to see the actors afterwards taking their curtain calls smilingly hand in hand.

Chekov completely lacks the violent quality. Chekov's people always seem to be almost inviting their fate by wholesale resignation to the worst that can happen before it has happened. Whereas Strindberg's people foresee their fate and defy it. Both lots seem to land up at just about the same place in the end—death, devastation, desolation, misery. But I can watch defiance with a beating heart, and resignation only with bored pity.

If Strindberg is virile, Chekov is haunting. That wild cry of the girl in the "Seagull" rings for ever. And I remember seeing Chekov's "Three Sisters"; in the stalls in front of me was a young reporter, and towards the end of the last scene he sat with his head bowed down, unable to look at the stage any longer, so unbearably moved was he.

I can't stand plays drenched with bad sentimentality or plays with badly constructed plots, but I like Barrie because Barrie had a genius for sentimentality. That was his art form. Practically everybody likes "Dear Brutus," and I heard doctors discuss "Mary Rose" so much that I was very interested in seeing it. Interested in the way Barrie took a disease—the most hopeless and in its later stages the most revolting—and transformed it into a fairy tale. Mary Rose and her bright island—*dementia præcox*, that most understandable of all mental diseases; in the beginning day-dreaming, inward eyes ever turned to that bright isle of fancy.

I read Dennis Mackail's "J. M. Barrie," that unusual biography, and its six hundred pages of mosaic gave me an instant desire to see all the Barrie plays I had missed. I straightway hied me to "A Kiss for Cinderella." I liked it; I liked it immensely. I haven't the smallest objection to a riot of never-never-land sentiment and whimsicality provided it all takes place in proportion. And Barrie's proportions at his best are very nearly perfect.

As for films, I don't suppose I saw more than a dozen silent

films of my life; they bored me because my poor sight never coordinated sufficiently quickly with my brain for me to follow who was doing what. But when the Talkies came along I enjoyed them from the start, even in their crudest form of "The Singing Fool." I've nothing to say about films that hasn't been said before—"a new medium," "a world power," etc. Of course I enjoy Disney's genius and some of those perfectly finished French films and practically any really good talkie (no! *not* "Gone with the Wind"!), including powerful thrillers like "On the Spot." What a remarkable character-study Charles Laughton made of the Italian head gangster (in Chicago of course—poor Chicago!) with his "lucky piece" and his instinctive sign of the cross to the Virgin Mary as the police irrevocably closed in on him. And that serio-comic moment when, having bumped off one of his colleagues, the dead man's brother-in-law called to expostulate on behalf of the widow, and said in tones of exasperation, "Can't you understand! My sister ain't got no sex appeal except for that *one* man! And you've killed him!"

## CHAPTER XII

ONE of the greatest influences on my adult life outside the office I have left to the last, and to a separate chapter. And that was my mother.

By the time I was twenty-three my mother was entirely dependent on me. And I mean entirely—emotionally as well as financially. The position of mother and daughter living together has its difficulties. Whenever I hear it said of such a couple: "They're more like friends than mother and daughter," I always think: "How very nice for the mother, but how very hard on the daughter!" I always felt my mother should have been the head of a large orphanage; she had too much affection to lavish wholly on one person; she was too vivid and possessive a personality herself to be able to live in someone else's life—and that someone of another generation—as she insisted upon doing. An orphanage of many children coming and going, over whom she could have spread widely her brisk, demonstrative, devoted, possessive domination and charm, would have given her a full outlet, and they would all have adored her, and valued forever the warm glow of those

few years with her. She was a very dear and lovable personality; I was deeply attached to her for fifty-five years, but the continual demand—growing greater as she grew older—that all our interests should be shared, which meant narrowed down to her interests and her generation, that all my affection should focus around her, and at that with the demonstrative affection of adolescence, almost crippled our relationship. The slightest incident, even a casual kiss given to someone and not to her, brought the reproachful "I've only got you! You used to be so affectionate to me when you were a child!"

In me the almost lifelong result was partially to inhibit any outward expression of affection to others. Far better express nothing than risk continual emotional scenes with my mother.

She was charming to my few friends, but they must be her friends as well as mine; she must be included in all going around together, however casual. (And as a matter of fact my friends accepted her with delight and always envied me such a wonderful mother.) The result was almost to prevent friendships for me—the ordinary social, casual friendships of youth.

I was over thirty before I dared to go to a theatre alone for fear of hurting her feelings—and then it had to be alone. If with someone else, then it must be her. And only in much later years, when I grew affluent enough to send her every little while to spend a few months with my youngest brother in Canada whom she adored, was it tacitly agreed that, in return, I could plan my own holidays.

And the amusing part of it was that although my mother was devoted to me, she, like most women of her generation, much preferred her three sons, and her devotion to me was partly in lieu of giving it to them—they didn't want her and didn't need it. She would have loved to have had a son living with her, and would have made far less unreasonable demands on him than she always made on me; the very pride of having a son who gave her all the comfort and luxury that I was able so gladly to give her in later life would have sufficed her, and in her feminine soul she would have thought little of any son who allowed himself to be dominated as she expected to dominate me. But as it happened all my brothers married young, their lives were settled far apart from her, and beyond visiting my brother and his wife in Canada, when she joyously poured out money on them and her grandchildren

(and I gladly furnished such funds, knowing how such gestures delighted her), she knew it was impossible to have any place in her sons' lives.

My mother's attitude to myself may seem very illogical, but she, of course, was a modified version of her own mother, and, anyway, logic has little to do with emotions, whether we admit it or not. I personally never know what I will feel until I feel it. I can forecast what my mental reactions will be under most circumstances, but my emotional reactions—never. I have always had to realize dismally in any emotional situation that there will be "delayed shock," felt months, perhaps years, after the situation has passed that caused it, and which I took, perhaps, with outward composure at the time.

I say all this, although it gives me pain, because I feel there are many daughters in my position, and although modern psychology floods our magazines and novels, it rarely penetrates to certain emotional relationships. Unmarried daughters are left responsible for their widowed mothers—meaning emotional as well as financial responsibility. Daughters shrink from saying, "Mother, I want my own life, my own friends, without this continual, even if tacit and silent, reminder and reproach from you that you want to come first."

To daughters in my position, however, or likely to drift into that position through fear of hurting a much-loved parent, I would say, "Don't allow any person to use you as an outlet for their worst qualities of possessiveness, jealousy, selfishness, even under the true guise of fond love. Somehow break away before such emotional domination becomes so rooted—in both—that part of you feels crippled, and part of her is a monstrous growth." I wish someone had said anything like this to me when I was in my early twenties. But nobody did. Everybody took it for granted, and still takes it for granted, that "looking after mother" is a blessing and privilege any daughter must be grateful for. I would say to any daughter, "Stand firm at any temporary cost, or both of you will lose, in a continual unspoken sense of strain on your side and reproach on hers." She will lose what might be a happy and serene relationship for her middle life and old age, and you will lose the capacity to create unself-conscious relationships with other people for yourself, through fear, fear that they too will turn into some form of emotional bondage again.



As for you mothers—especially you mothers who pride yourselves on being modern: “I never interfere with my daughter; my daughter and I live together, but of course it’s quite different with us because——” Oh, but is it? Never mind what she says, she says whatever she thinks you want her to say, having been all her life exceedingly fond of you. But you! Get off her young or perhaps not so young back, take your arms away from round her neck. What are you going to do for interests? Oh, go and join the Vicarage sewing circle, if you can’t think of anything else. Thank God for the Vicarage sewing circles of England, how firmly they stand! Seriously—do it, or something like it, if you haven’t any other immediate outlet. It may lead to something you like better; narrow tracks have a way of joining a main road somewhere.

To all girls who live with their mothers I recommend the above passages. Break those emotional claims, that possessive dependence, “I’ve only got you.” If you haven’t got the courage or heart or lack of heart to do it, to stand the deep sighs, the saddened voice, etc., put this book somewhere where your mother will read it.

### CHAPTER XIII

To continue my career story. When I came back from my American trip I remained with Mr. Ravens at £2 a week, but began reluctantly to look for another job—any job—at £2 5s. Of course I was beset by my usual terrors of being “out of work,” unable to pay the rent, unable to keep our modest little home going for my mother and myself, ending, as always, in the workhouse. None of these things happened.

I answered dozens of advertisements for several months, quite without result. My ambitious demand for £2 5s. put me out of court as a typist, and there were hardly any other jobs for women in the business world in 1911. Incidentally, I interviewed Charles Higham’s famous Advertising Agency. They were advertising for “a brilliant business woman” at £2 rising to £3 a week as personal secretary to Charles Higham. But they didn’t want me. And, again, Gamages were advertising for a shipping and correspondence clerk at £2 5s. And I can see now the look of astonishment on the face of the intelligent and good-looking young man who interviewed me

(in after years I recognized his picture in the newspapers as Mr. Eric Gamage). There were a crowd of men waiting, and he explained tersely that under no circumstances could they—would they—employ a woman, even though he hurriedly agreed I seemed to have the qualifications needed.

At last two friends helped me to land two jobs at £2 5s. simultaneously. One friend was in a bank. The bank were having so much trouble with their women staff (typists only, of course) under men supervisors that they decided to try the daring experiment of a woman supervisor. My friend recommended me, and on her recommendation they took me.

The other was more roundabout. The Association was holding a public meeting at Hammersmith, one of a series we were getting up to explain Mr. Lloyd George's revolutionary "9d. for 4d." Insurance Act as it affected women clerks, and I, with other members, had promised to be there.

It was a Tuesday evening. I came home late and tired from the office, but after a meal I reluctantly plodded off to Hammersmith under the usual moral compulsion of keeping my promise. At the meeting a member said to me, "Do you know anyone good enough for an exceptionally good job at about £2 a week?" "Would they go to £2 5s.?" I asked. "They might," she said doubtfully. On her introduction I had an interview with a Mr. Scott-Scott, who was extremely kind, but afterwards tactfully wrote to me that I was too good for his job; and enclosed an introduction to a Mr. Thorold, who, he explained, was a Canadian, the Chairman of a financial house in Lombard Street, and always looking for unusually intelligent people.

I saw Mr. Thorold. I saw him six times. I got quite in the habit of walking into his palatial offices and asking him had he made up his mind to take me yet. He never had. Yet the brilliant, impressionable, vacillating creature was sufficiently impressed with me to be unable to say No. He always said he would think it over and let me know.

And then one morning the bank sent me a terse note, engaging me at £2 5s. and requesting me to commence my duties the following morning. Armed with that note as an ultimatum, I hustled into Mr. Thorold's office. I showed him the note. I explained, "I would rather work for you; I think it will be more interesting." Gratification spread over his expressive face. I did not know then,

but learnt *ad nauseam* during the ensuing eight years that ultimatums, plus flattery, were the only methods of dealing with Mr. Thorold. He immediately engaged me at £2 5s. for a three months' trial, remarking, "It is a very high salary for a woman, and at the end of three months you may not want to stay, and we may not want you to stay. But we hope it won't be so."

At none of our six meetings had he made any suggestion as to what my duties might be. I had a long August Bank holiday weekend before me, and, I suggested that, as I knew nothing of finance, he might provide me with some beginner's reading matter. He piled my arms with books, including Hartley Withers's fascinating and amusing "Stocks and Shares." And with that book I began my financial career.

I informed the bank that I couldn't take their job for the moment, and besought them to let me apply again in three months, to which they kindly agreed, thereby relieving my "out-of-work" complex. And I said goodbye to Mr. Ravens and to my eight years' happy service with that quiet and gentle gentleman. I used to go down to Tooley Street to visit him about once a year. He watched my progress with affectionate pride, and years after touched me by saying during one of my annual visits: "I've missed you ever since you left—I miss you more every day, I think."

#### CHAPTER XIV

WILLIAM JAMES THOROLD and his famous personality deserve a chapter to themselves. He was an Irish Canadian and had started life as a parson—"and very interesting sermons he used to preach," his brother told me. He abandoned the pulpit for the stage (many years later in London he "doubled" for that popular matinée idol George Alexander, whom he closely resembled). He went from the stage to journalism in New York, then financial journalism in London, and finally, with influential backing, established his own financial issuing house in London, specializing in Canadian and American issues.

His business reputation in the City was excellent, his erratic brilliance admired by a wide circle, and his Company's standing with its bankers second to none; but he had the reputation of

being "the most difficult man in the City to work for." And he was. Someone wittily described his staff as "the other day" kind of staff, meaning most of them had only come in "the other day." In the long run—but it was generally a very short run—not a single member of his staff could stay the course, and even his auditors at last abandoned him.

Within a few months of starting in that exciting, disordered office in 1912 I had formed a permanent staff in a separate department out of a handful of temporary typists, and had laid down by sheer "brain force and ugliness" an unwritten law that no one, not even Thorold, could use my staff, engage them or dismiss them, except myself. And they remained with me for many years, until I left. They were, in fact, the only stable, willing, loyal staff inside that extraordinary office, where staff other than my own seemed to surge in and out every day, competent and incompetent alike. Although I personally came to feel very great—too great—personal loyalty to Thorold, inspired by his brilliant mentality and magnetic personality, I had sense enough to realize that no staff would stand such treatment as he, "the most difficult man in the City to work for," meted out.

Difficult! I should say he was. A cold-blooded, completely selfish egocentric streaked with sentimentality, he had a crazy, irrational temper he never attempted to control. He haggled interminably over every salary rise, and never gave it without demands and ultimatums levelled at him like pistol shots—but he would give you a box of chocolates with a princely gesture and feel himself a popular hero as he awaited and received your thanks; and, when he finally gave the salary increase, he generally hated you for weeks afterwards. On the other hand, he occasionally—oh, very occasionally—took your breath away after you had gone through all the demanding and ultimatums by suddenly giving you more than you had asked for.

(One of the results of my eight years with Thorold was that I made up my mind never to let any employee of mine have to ask for a rise. If they are worth it, give it to them. Let them know they can always depend on getting salary increases for good work without the miserable ordeal of asking for it. That promise to myself I have kept for the last twenty-odd years.)

But Thorold was brilliant, with that rapidity of mental uptake that made it a stimulus for me to work for him, and I broke all

records by working with him for  $8\frac{1}{2}$  years. The first  $5\frac{1}{2}$  were among the most stimulating of my business life, and the other 3 years plain unmitigated hell. One of the few good things about Thorold was that he praised enthusiastically and immediately. His brilliant brain so appreciated good work, rapid initiative, constructive criticism, that impulsive praise burst from him.

He had about the most brilliant mind I have ever met, and although he had no interest whatever in any intellectual or cultural things if such things were discussed—and they were always being interjected into our business conversations by me—he couldn't help being interested and interesting. He had a mind that contributed to everything it touched. And he had a magnetic personality of which he was very proud. He often talked about it and talked about what he called the mechanics of personal magnetism, and told me, among other things, "You can't be magnetic when you're hungry or tired." "If you want to exert magnetism over a particular individual, speak to him in a very quiet, confidential voice."

Some of the utterances, axioms, maxims, and absurdities he used to toss off have remained with me. His insistence on lucidity of diction in correspondence with clients—"Don't give them any mental processes. They have no mental processes." His comment on a slow-witted employee, "Something wrong with the spinal column." Of anything that he disliked, from bad coffee to bad English, "I hate it as I ought to hate sin." A suggestion that we could improve an employee by training, "You'd have had to start the training before he was born." His murmur during a client's excited account of his quarrels with his local churchwardens, "To these things do we devote our lives!" His classification of so-called errors, "Mistakes, stupidities—and asinities!"

His insistent "Don't use adjectives or underscoring. Word your statements so that they don't need artificial emphasis." As an illustration Thorold said he was once working for an austere American—yes, austere American—newspaper proprietor, and Thorold used the expression "The largest newspaper in the world." The proprietor took out "in the world" as superfluous, remarking, "If you say the largest newspaper—that's sufficient. You are not talking about the newspapers in the moon."

His absurdities—he always claimed for himself a logical mind ("I don't mean in things like managing my staff," he added hastily,

seeing a gleam in my eye), and seriously asserted that no one who was not a B.A. could have a logical mind (he was a B.A.). His grave assertion during my first few months with him that "Women are incapable of understanding financial matters," adding handsomely to me, "Your only limitations are the limitations of the female mind." In after years I used to quote this picturesque utterance of his to newspaper reporters, and when I last saw Thorold in New York in 1937 he told me that newspaper cuttings used to reach him from friends all over the world with this utterance underlined and the marginal query attached, "Did *you* say this?"

Above all, I remember his insistence upon two cardinal principles in all financial literature that emanated from our House. "Be *accurate*. Be *definite*. Do not say a security yields 5 per cent. when it only yields  $4\frac{15}{16}$ ths per cent. Do not talk about 'large' profits. Say what they are." He used to tell a story, as an illustration, of an American salesman who wanted to sell a new power station on the slogan "Twice the power of Niagara at half the cost." And the Directors refused his slogan and broke his heart by coldly pointing out to him that it was  $1\frac{13}{16}$ th times the power of Niagara at  $\frac{29}{50}$ ths of the cost.

To Thorold's "Be accurate, be definite," I added my own maxim, "Be simple." Don't use technical terms. Let all who run be able to read your statements. At that time we were handling many Municipal and Government issues, and in the first financial letter I ever drafted, about a City of Edmonton Loan, I stated in simple words just how such public loans were secured and on what public funds—instead of using the usual expression "obligation of the City" and letting it go at that. Thorold rebuked me, saying that such knowledge was taken for granted. I argued that I myself didn't know it until I digested it from the "small type" matter in the prospectus, and that our clients might just as well have it in its digested form. He agreed then and thereafter, although he told me later that the City used sometimes to laugh at us for our "simple explanations of the obvious." But afterwards, when war came and war loans had to be sold to a financially illiterate public, the Government, under the guidance of the best publicity and financial experts in the country, went in for just such simple explanations. And now, owing to their excellently simple advertisements, most people do know how War Loans, Savings Certificates, etc., are secured.

When I started that August Monday in 1912 in Mr. Thorold's office it was to find that Mr. Thorold had gone to Canada for two months, and that the office was in charge of the Company Secretary, a highly intelligent and nice-looking Lancashire lad of twenty-five, Mr. Turner—Mr. Richard Sefton Turner, who some eight years later was to be my very able partner for more than twenty years in our own financial house.

I may say that until the war brought enlistment Mr. Turner survived in Thorold's office, where so many perished, because he had a first-class brain, a most disarming personality, and had what Thorold hadn't got, a knowledge of the intricate technicalities of finance acquired during years of training with one of the Joint Stock Banks.

On that morning, however, Mr. Turner didn't know what to do with me. Mr. Thorold had left no instructions as to what I was engaged for—beyond suggesting I might help a few temporary typists who were working on some 4,000 postcards in a temporary room in another part of the building.

I found that the Company were building up a clientele principally interested in trans-Atlantic securities; that with the prospectus of every issue—they had just completed a big Government issue, hence the 4,000 postcards—they enclosed a postcard to be filled in and returned by anyone interested in such securities, that these postcards were hastily listed by temporary typists, handed to our printers to be included in our next issue, and then the postcards were shot into cupboards and forgotten.

I found that the Company had no idea what percentage of postcards came back, how many ever turned into clients, what the ultimate cost of clients thus obtained ran into, and so forth. There were 20,000 postcards in the cupboards, and the permanent typing staff said "it wasn't their work" to deal with postcards. But I have always been fascinated by analyses showing results with exactitude. I saw that the Company's whole past, present, and future clientele apparently lay within these postcards, and I fell on the despised 4,000 postcards with enthusiasm and turned the remaining 20,000 out of the files. And by the time Thorold returned I produced analyses to him showing the exact origin of every client obtained during the Company's three years' existence. I also pointed out to Thorold that the postcards the Company were then using were so worded as to bring in the minimum number of replies, whereas a

postcard more attractively worded—specimen produced by me—might double this. Actually it quadrupled it.

Thorold was greatly impressed. Like many brilliant people he paid great lip service to system, and had none. He would invent elaborate red and green and brown and blue filing trays for dealing with incoming, outgoing, to be filed, and in suspense correspondence, dismiss an office boy with literal roars of rage for misunderstanding the latest code-colour or password, whilst most of his correspondence lay on his desk in piles half a foot deep. Watching him uncover stratum after stratum, hunting for buried treasure every time a vital document was needed, I used to say to him, "Try the glacial epoch."

His staff were terrified of him, of his irrational tempers, his arbitrary dismissals, his invective. He would declaim to a terrified office boy with a voice and emphasis suited to Shakespearean tragedy, "God gave you brains for you to use them!" And when the terrified child, sacked, fled from the room, I would get the death sentence cancelled by pointing out to Thorold, "If that office boy was as intelligent as you think he ought to be he would be employing you instead of your employing him." A grin—he had a sense of humour—would replace inflamed anger. Grasping the nettle firmly—and flatteringly—paid, as long as it suited Thorold to have it pay.

Again, Thorold was deeply impressed by another incident that as far as I was concerned was just sheer luck—and masculine generosity.

One day in 1912 when I was still a raw beginner I walked into Thorold's sanctum with a letter he had dictated to me. Someone was sitting there whom I did not know and did not look at. Thorold read the letter, and I—gratuitously—advised him in a rapid sentence or two to rearrange it and change the context. "You fix it," he said, handing it back to me. As always, if he approved his approval was instant. Afterwards he came out to me and said, "That was Mr. R. B. Bennett of Canada who was with me when you came in—one of the most dynamic personalities in Canada and certain to be Canadian Premier one day. When you left the room he said to me, 'No price can be placed on a woman like that! She is invaluable to the firm that gets her!'" And the impressionable, volatile Thorold added with a heady admiration in his voice, "No man or woman could receive higher praise from



a higher source than R. B. Bennett!" That established my abilities in Thorold's eyes, and I felt grateful to Mr. Bennett (now Viscount Bennett) then and ever after. It was a generous sentence from a great man about an unknown woman clerk he had never seen before, saw only for sixty seconds, and was not likely to see again.

## CHAPTER XV

IN 1914 war broke out. Thorold went back to Canada. Other Directors and the Company Secretary, Mr. Turner, shortly after joined up, so did the other young men in the office (and Thorold paid their salaries while they were in the army, continuing it permanently to the mother of the only man who was killed). I found myself with a handful of girl typists and office boys in charge of the business, either to keep it open or close it down. I kept it going with sufficient success, so that in 1918 every man had his job to come back to at a better salary than when he left.

During those years we sold hundreds of thousands of pounds of War Loan to all sorts of people. I remember being at the Bank of England at 6 o'clock on a winter's morning collecting prospectuses in fleets of taxicabs. There were many other representatives of financial houses there too, but I was the only woman. War Loans were hard selling when the millions of wage-earners of the country had never been appealed to before as potential investors, and the sensible, simple language that would appeal to them had still to be worked out. Fortunately, in this war the Government have learnt, and learnt well, the lessons of the last war regarding publicity methods for popularizing War Loan, and no publicity could be better planned and conducted on the principles of "Be accurate, be definite, be simple." But in the last war the Government had to call in financial houses and publicity experts to do the job for them, and we didn't do it too badly, and did it for very modest commissions.

By the way, air raids in the 1914-18 period in the City were astonishing rather than terrifying. I remember the Saturday when one of my staff called out, "Oh, look at all those aeroplanes!" We were just opposite the Bank of England; we scrambled out on the balcony; most of us had never seen an aeroplane, and watched

the attractive V formation of, I think, about a dozen planes fly over and hover and poise for a few minutes—or seconds, as it probably was—over the Bank. That it was anything else than a practice flight of our own planes simply never occurred to us. German planes, enemy planes—and, anyway, we called them aeroplanes in full then—in the heart of the City on a Saturday morning! But when the first bomb dropped to our incredulous eyes and ears, everything occurred to us. We scrambled down five flights of stairs like bolting rabbits. I just retained sense enough to remember to see that everyone was out of the office before I scrambled too. Not much damage was done. Half an hour afterwards I went over to Sperling's office on the corner of Moorgate, which had been hit but no one hurt, and saw amid a wrecked office—or what passed for wreck in those days—a silk topper poised on a shelf, completely unharmed. I remember other air raids in Chiswick, where I lived. I remember a week of them regularly each night. And how strange and dull it seemed the first night they stopped coming!

But those first years in the City! Those for me were the romantic years, the golden years, in which everything was new and fascinating—and terrifying, working as I was amid all the difficulties of war, with what seemed to me immense responsibilities on my very inexperienced shoulders, and no one to turn to even for advice.

From the start in 1912 I found finance fascinating. Most of it in those days for our particular House was American and Canadian finance, and afterwards when I roamed round America and Canada on various visits I was interested to note how many of the places I knew beforehand from prospectuses and issues I had handled. Alabama Traction, Georgia-Carolina Light and Power, Edmonton Tramways, Sherbrooke Power, Westmount Bonds, Quebec to Vancouver schools, water systems, public utilities.

I liked the atmosphere of the City. I liked the excitement of negotiating what to me then were large deals. The first large amount I handled alone during war-time was \$80,000 of City of Westmount bonds. Some House held them, wanted to sell, couldn't locate a buyer because there was no market. They were good bonds, and I resolutely found a buyer, pushed the whole transaction through in a few hours, took  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. commission for my Company, or rather Thorold's Company, and felt thrilled—never

was sky so blue or sunshine so golden as on that day, despite the fact that, although it benefited Thorold, it made no difference to my weekly salary. Another deal I handled was for \$500,000 of bonds of a very good but also unmarketable issue. It took me months of careful placing, and the bonds proved a very good investment for our clients during the next twenty years, at the end of which period they were redeemed.

I remember that I was carrying through that first deal for \$80,000 late at night—completion was to be between our respective banks the next morning—and I felt a premonition that it wasn't going to go through, that something would happen the next morning to upset it. The premonition, however, was caused partly by my inexperience and excitement and partly by the fact that it was very late and I had been working non-stop for eight hours without food. The next day "my first deal" went through without a hitch, and I have had sense enough to remember that premonition ever after and remember how unfounded it proved to be—due, like most premonitions, to outside circumstances, such as fatigue and hunger.

One of the most nerve-shaking jobs that I ever had to do during the war—nerve-shaking to me—was making the round of the City financial houses, the banks, and the usual business contacts, which, of course, Thorold had hitherto handled as regards the most important, and one of the other Directors or Mr. Turner as regards the less important. Now I had to handle the lot at a period when women negotiating business were completely unheard of in that last masculine stronghold of the City, Finance. Of course, the men were very nice to me when they got over the initial shock, but it was an awful effort to walk in and introduce myself as if my presence there was the most usual happening instead of the most unusual. Its very unusualness, however, sometimes gave me an advantage. I was generally "shown in" at once to the great man, whoever he might be, no matter how many others might be waiting, and sometimes the great man himself came bustling out to escort me in as a tribute of courtesy to my unusual sex. Bank managers were particularly nice, Mr. Day of the Midland Bank putting me at my ease with a kindly remark: "I've got a daughter just about your age."

I found it much more difficult to talk to City contacts on the phone if they had not seen me—which meant they did not know

of my existence. As soon as they realized that a feminine voice was talking to them, obvious panic occurred in the masculine voice at the other end, and sometimes a tendency to cut the conversation short with a nervous "Perhaps one of your gentlemen will call in and discuss the matter with us." Once they had seen me, however, it was generally smooth sailing, though I never ceased to be a nervous sailor—the usual feminine inferiority complex, I suppose. I was only too well aware how unusual it all was.

I made business friends in the City during those years whose goodwill was a great assistance when I helped to found our own business. And they were a generous-minded lot too; when Thorold came back in 1917 several of them went out of their way to speak of my business ability to him in the highest terms. And, of course, with Thorold a possession praised or coveted by others took on a glamour of preciousness in his eyes. He used to solemnly assure me, "You've made the very finest impression everywhere; I feel as proud of you as if you were a child of my own," what time we continued the interminable argument about an increase in salary.

Interviewing clients was another job I felt terrified about in advance. I felt sure no client worthy of the name would consent to be interviewed by a woman. My fears were needless. My first client was a woman who came in to purchase some Bonds she fancied. She had made up her own mind about them, she didn't want to know any particulars, and when I went into the reception room to see her she was standing just inside the door with the money—all in notes—clasped in her hand. I can see her now. In five minutes she was out of the office with her Bonds (they were bearer), and whenever she came in after that she always insisted on seeing me, and only me.

That actually proved to be the trouble eventually. So far from objecting to doing business with a woman, practically all the men and women clients, large and small—and some of them were very substantial—regarded me as a fascinating novelty, something no other financial House could offer them. Years after, when the men came back, Directors and staff, the clients still insisted on seeing me. And when I was a Director of my own Corporation one of our able managers bluntly told me that it would make it easier for him if I never saw clients, as after an initial interview with me it was such hard work for him to get them accustomed to dealing with a man. I didn't mind—in fact, I was thankful; I still hated "con-

tacts," never got over feeling shy and nervous, and if I had to see big people in big banks or magnates—even the friendliest of them—I still approached them with a morning-after-the-night-before feeling.

## CHAPTER XVI

WHEN war broke out in 1914 I had been only two years in the financial world, and I noticed with profound interest that, while most grades of Government and Municipal securities everywhere continued paying their interest, many other top-grade securities passed their dividends. British trustee securities and famous industrials fell dismally in value, while City of Callao and Chinese Government 8 per cent. Bonds paid up regularly and eventually redeemed their Bonds at par in accordance with their contractual obligations. Hence left entirely to select my own recommendations for our clients while I was in charge during the war years, I concentrated on Government and Municipal obligations everywhere, with satisfactory results.

Those were still the days when "default" was a word that even South American authorities flinched at and would do much to avoid; the days when Canada boasted that no Canadian Public Authority had ever defaulted on its obligations. Contracts were still contracts, bonds were bonds, a premier obligation, and preference shares had their clearly recognized rights. We were still living in an old world of principles which, whether they were good or bad, were quite clearly recognized principles—a capitalist system that, with all its faults, and there were many, existed and flourished only because its word was as good as its bond. I would like to see the best of that old world restored with its fundamental "sanctity of contracts." I fear a world in which contracts and treaties, however solemnly signed, evoke a cynical sigh as to how long they will be honoured if it suits either of the contracting parties to dishonour them. In those days the notion of a defaulting British Government would have been laughed at as unthinkable.

Then and afterwards in my own business I tended more and more to concentrate on Government and Municipal securities. In fact, during the next twenty years I rather prided myself on being

able to say with some truth that I knew something about most Government and Municipal securities and their guaranteed offshoots all over the world. I was not very much interested in other securities; I knew a little about some railways, chiefly the debentures and prior charges of Canadian, American, and South American Railways, but I have never been able to work up much interest in Home Rails (there have been so many  $\times$  quantities attached to them during all of my financial lifetime) or in industrial securities, particularly ordinary shares.

I remember after the last war elaborate theses were put forward, supported by so-called statistics over an  $\times$  number of years, to the effect that ordinary shares were the best investment in the long run, but I never believed it. That sort of jobbing backwards, however honest in its intentions, inevitably means loading the dice in favour of your thesis—and loaded dice can be made to prove any theory. The newspapers have sometimes quoted my dictum that there are more ways of twisting figures than trimming hats. There are. Balance sheets never impress me (except as romantic documents); "patents" terrify me; what I like is a long, stable record of profits and dividends. I also thoroughly approve of the best of Unit Trusts after fifteen years' experience of them.

I may just as well say at once that there is no royal road to making money in the financial world, or if there is, I do not know of it. The stories that tell you of their hero gambling on the Stock Exchange and making a fortune overnight forget to carry the story on and tell you that he lost it again the morning after. I remember once saying to a client who had been all his life a very big operator with almost "professional" judgment and acumen and reputed success, "Tell me frankly, if you had just put your money in Trustee securities in the first place" (he had inherited a wad), "wouldn't you have been just as well off by now?"

"If I had left it all in three-and-a-half per cents.?" he mused in reply. "Yes, I should have been better off. But"—and he leaned forward emphatically—"I shouldn't have had the fun I've had!"

And he has said it. That's the crux of investment advice problems. The average investor as I have known him over thirty years wants the highest possible yield on his money, a large increase in capital, absolute safety, and a lot of fun and excitement. I remember a clergyman carrying on a long correspondence with us over some excellent Australian Government Bonds we had recom-

mended, and finally, after a dozen letters, he wrote us that they were too risky for him. And yet the same gentleman appeared later in the law courts, mournful witness against Jacob Factor or some such swindler, stating that he had parted with £20,000 for a so-called "investment" in some gold-brick swindle without an astronomical fraction of the fussy investigation with which he considered and refused our Australian Government Bonds. (For sheer folly in the financial world recommend me every time to a parson of blameless life and spotless reputation—presumably some form of escape from too much virtue. Do women make sensible investors? Yes, women haven't much money, but on the whole they are very careful and cautious.)

In the long run there isn't any method of picking disaster-proof investments. One can handle investments for close personal friends that one almost prays over, so great is one's sense of fiduciary responsibility, and they may turn out no better than the investment one casually recommends to the stranger who says, "I like a run for my money." You can range all the way from Trustee securities to wild-cat speculations and fare precisely as well or as badly in both, according to the times.

I must have scrutinized thousands of investment lists in my time, and some of them picked by the most experienced conservative family advisers intent only on "the sweet security of 3 per cents." have made me gasp at the final results, which have been neither sweet nor secure. I have also seen some wild-cat speculations turn into well-trained domestic animals that do credit to any sponsor.

And so adventitious is advice that I remember in the slump of 1931 we, my own firm, had a great part—far too great a part—of our capital in Australian Government Bonds, which had then fallen to very low prices. We were very exercised as to what to do—cut our loss, sell and reinvest in something that would recoup the loss, or hold on. Mr. Ravens, Mr. Turner, and myself discussed it long, often, and anxiously. In the end my mother overheard a chance remark of mine, "We've got a lot in Australia," and said cheerfully and emphatically, "Australia's bound to recover." My mother had never made an investment in her life, knew nothing of finance, and less than nothing of Australia. But that chance remark decided me, like the casual pin and the Bible text. I plumped for holding. And in the end our Australians

soberly came back to the prices, and more than the prices, we had paid for them.

People will remember in the last 1920-30 boom a well-known newspaper offered a prize for the best Plan of Investment for £10,000, and the judges were among the weightiest financial experts in the country. The winning Plan was published and sounded excellent—but anyone who put £10,000 into it would have lost about 75 per cent. of it in the slump years that followed. Swedish Match, I remember, was one of the, at that time, apparently excellent choices.

Taking it all in all, I like the City. I like business men. I like their outlook and methods of business, their careful exactitude in fulfilling understandings. The spoken word or the written bond carry equal weight. I like the atmosphere of business, its simple supply and demand logic, its fundamental reasonableness and insistence on compromise. I like to know where I am, and one knows so much better where one is in the business world as compared with those complicated other worlds, of social service, medicine, and the like, where all sorts of Freudian complexes and human reactions seem to enter. The City is a very impersonal place; the human equation, of course, enters into it, but far less than in other places. I have never had to offer my City friends such flattery, adulation, admiration, and praise to get a business deal carried through as I have had to exert to get something ethically worth while accepted and carried through elsewhere.

## CHAPTER XVII

DURING the war years I was keeping the business going without Thorold, Turner, or any Director or Executives, and I worked till ten and eleven at night and all week-ends.

Everything we did was reported to Thorold in Canada and New York by weekly correspondence, plus weekly bank statements from the auditors, plus copies of this and carbons of that. And although, of course, he was surprised and delighted that his business was being carried on in London during his absence so successfully—and said so in occasional bursts of gratifying appreciation—equally



of course he took exception to everything, denounced everything, and the correspondence grew hectic.

He returned in 1917, and when he strode into the office he would barely shake hands with me. And what a stormy session we had on the night of his arrival—sitting in the darkness of his private office, while one of the first war primitive air raids sounded overhead, with just enough moonlight to outline his handsome angry head against the sumptuous mahogany panelling.

I had kept his business together for him since 1914 on a salary under £4 a week, had half killed myself with the strain of doing it, and had done it more than successfully. But according to Thorold everything I had done was wrong. Everything I had done was deliberately wrong! And it all poured out from him within five minutes of meeting me after more than two years' absence, until a sudden and unpremeditated bit of flattery from me brought him up short. Then he began to wonder whether he was quite wise in having said quite so much to the one person so necessary to his business as I was at that time.

In twenty-four hours he had turned completely round, gravely assured me that he deeply valued my personal loyalty to him, that he wouldn't part with me for my weight in gold—while hastily deferring my suggestion of an increase in pay. However, I had sense enough to say I wanted £500 a year, and actually got it after only four months' argument. At my firm suggestion he dated the increase that four months back, which gave me a comfortable cheque in hand. And in addition he suddenly presented me with an expensive travelling clock and a gold watch. That was Thorold at his best—but his best didn't last long.

Both Mr. Turner and myself were always supposed to be on a profit-sharing agreement from 1912 onwards, much emphasized when we asked for salary increases, but we never saw an agreement. They were years that mostly ran at a loss, anyway, due to the malaise that set in in the business world in 1912—the shadow of coming events? Then came war in 1914, and the slump. During bad times Thorold was always at his best—courageous, imperturbable. During good times he was always and instantly at his worst—excited, elated, impossible. In the autumn of 1917 came the turn of the tide—shadows again? Business began looking up. And instantly, as favourable balance-sheet figures mounted week by week, all talk of profit sharing vanished, and Thorold proclaimed, "I'm

not going to share the profits I make with my employees." He was very fond of using the word "employees" with an intonation that suggested coolies. He also added to me, "I couldn't afford to quarrel with you before, because if I quarrelled with you I jiggered up my whole business, but now I can do without you."

Thorold came back from Canada in 1917, and a year later, in 1918, I collapsed with appendicitis complicated by overwork and the enormous pressure of working with Thorold's personality, standing between him and the staff, mostly office boys, junior clerks, and girl typists who had worked with me with very great loyalty while I had been in sole charge.

I went down with appendicitis just as Thorold was on an up-wave of success, his first for many years, and that fact, combined with my prospective enforced absence for a couple of months, made him in twenty-four hours see me as completely valueless. He was like that. With him to-day was the only day, yesterday forgotten, to-morrow never comes.

We had a row, and I resigned—sixty seconds before he sacked me.

"The most difficult man in the City to work for" had proved too difficult even for me.

I went into the nursing home for my operation forty-eight hours afterwards. I asked for six months' salary in view of past services, and Thorold gave it—after some bitter comments from me. And then, characteristically, he added nursing-home expenses and surgeon's fees. We parted, with almost heart-broken bitterness on my side and complete indifference on his. He was in an emotional whirl of excitement and elation, induced by a few months' success in booming markets.

## CHAPTER XVIII

I WENT into a London nursing home for my appendicitis operation, and because the nursing home had a convalescent branch in Brighton I went down to Brighton after a few weeks. My London surgeon, a woman, referred me to a woman medical colleague in Brighton, to look after the stitches, etc. I was still in bed, feeling very miserable, when a little dark woman in glasses was shown in, Dr. Helen Boyle.

(Years after a man said to me: "I have a theory that the world is run by little dark women in glasses. Think of the most powerful personality you know, the one who always gets her own way, who rules everyone around her. I bet she's a little dark woman in glasses!" And I thought of Dr Boyle, laughed, and agreed.)

She looked at the appendicitis scar, said it was healing nicely; looked at my tongue, said it was nice and clean; and then, hearing that my job had to do with that magic word "finance," she sat down and talked to me for two hours about some little hospital she was running. She was worried about it; it had no money, no money at all. I was too ill and miserable with my own worries to heed other people's worries. (Fallen out with Thorold—out of work—my mother to keep—workhouse complex—and all the rest of it.) But I murmured, "Get somebody to promise you £25 provided nine other people promise you the same—that'll be £250." I remembered the £2 promise of my Typists' Association days that helped us to get our vital £50 together. £250 sounded like a small life-saver to Dr. Boyle just then. She went on talking about her hospital. I didn't take much notice of what she was saying, I was too ill and miserable, but as this was in 1918 I took it for granted that it was a hospital for wounded soldiers.

I only knew that I slept that night as I hadn't slept for months, and every time she bustled in to see me during the next few weeks of convalescence, still talking about her hospital, I always slept after her visits. (Someone once said of her, "When Dr. Boyle comes into a room it's like the electric light being suddenly switched on.") At the end of Dr. Boyle's third visit I felt she was the most remarkable person I had ever met in my life, and that I adored her. Then she suddenly suggested that, as I had fallen out with Thorold, was at a loose end for the moment, needed more convalescing, I should come and stay in her house for a month or two and try and raise some money for her hospital. She was convinced I was an answer to prayer for her worries.

And there began in 1918 a close friendship that has lasted ever since, has had no ups or downs, and has been, above all other things in all my fortunate life, the fortunate thing I have been most profoundly grateful for.

I was thankful to find a temporary job in the middle of my troubles with Thorold, and I felt very emphatically that I wanted to get some money for Dr. Boyle. I couldn't take much interest in

her little hospital. I remember saying to her earnestly, "Dr. Boyle, if you wanted money for a cats' home I'd love to try and get it for you because you want it." And I added that it would be much easier to get money for a cats' home than for her hospital. Indeed, with my cat-loving mind I visualized appeal notepaper with a string of lovely little kittens' heads diagonally across the page.

I found that her hospital was not for wounded soldiers as I had supposed, but was The Lady Chichester Hospital (at that time the only hospital of its kind in the country) for Early Preventive Treatment for Nervous Diseases among Women and Children—a subject then the Cinderella of medicine, now the most popular under every kind of neuroses and psychoses titles.

My mind was blank on the subject of nervous diseases. I had always supposed that the few people who suffered from mental trouble were born that way and were as completely incurable as lepers. I was surprised, very surprised (and many other people would have been equally surprised in 1918), to find that mental and nervous troubles were about as prevalent as the common cold, and possibly somewhat more curable.

I knew that to make a successful appeal to a public entirely taken up with wounded soldiers and utterly uninterested in nervous diseases among women and children I had to find a "story," a sob-story. I remember going through some of the case-sheets at the hospital with the sympathetic matron, Sister Bell, listening to what was to my lay mind, in its then state of abysmal ignorance, the weirdest collection of symptoms and case-histories, and picking out two or three as having sob appeals. I finally used as the basis of my appeal letter the story of a little girl of thirteen, father in the Army, mother bedridden, in charge of younger brothers and sisters, everything to do for the mother, everything to do for the children, including taking them and herself to school—until the child told the neighbours she felt she couldn't go on; she felt she was going mad. Our hospital was asked to take her in. We couldn't. We hadn't a bed or a corner to spare in our crowded old-fashioned house; we had a waiting list of over eighty cases, many even more urgent than hers. And that child was certified insane and sent to an asylum, because we were too poor to help her.

That story in a letter appealing for funds brought us in one way and another some two or three thousand pounds. Months after, even years after, people from all over England, from France, from

South Africa, wrote to me sending me small gifts of money, saying that the story of that child had reached them and how touched they had been.

But it was hard, slow going, and I always regard getting that first bit of money for the hospital as one of the hardest jobs I ever did in my life—what with clashing appeals for wounded soldiers, prisoners of war, etc., to say nothing of paper restrictions.

And, incidentally, I got my first promise of £25 from Dame Henrietta Barnett (of Toynbee Hall, Whitechapel Art Gallery, and Hampstead Garden City fame), who was a friend of Dr. Boyle. I went to see her, ostensibly to ask for her advice for my first hospital appeal letter, as she was a famous money-raiser for her great undertakings, but really in the hope of getting that first £25 from her, although I was told it was highly unlikely. She took my letter—it was a long two-paged, single-spaced affair (I'm never afraid of long appeal letters—you can do more spell-binding in two pages than one, and if your letter tells a story and your story is drama, people will read it with breathless interest to the end)—and said: "This is too long! People won't read long letters." At the end of the first page she said, "This is *very* well written!" At the end of the second page, which ended with a powerful appeal for £25, she said. "This is a *beautiful* letter, but" (contemptuous of my ignorance) "you're not asking enough! Why, *I'll* give you £25 *now!*" And she marched across to her desk and handed me a cheque for £25 there and then. And on that cheque from Dame Henrietta I raised nine more cheques for £25. So that was £250 to start with—and the rest slowly trickled in.

That first two or three thousand pounds, thank goodness, relieved the hospital's most urgent troubles; it was at that ebb-tide in its fortunes when a little money then meant far more to it than much larger sums later.

With that lift, like going up a steep hill and somebody gives you a push up the hardest bit, the hospital got over its worst worries. In the course of the next year or two we moved it from its old-fashioned house to the beautiful premises it now occupies in Aldrington House, Hove. As years went by it has added a large out-patients' department, extended its treatment to men in a special house close by, and extended and expanded and introduced most of the special treatments and equipments since in vogue. It has been able to engage experienced full-time financial organizers

who have got far more money for it than I could ever have done; but for the last twenty-five years I have been its Honorary Financial Adviser, and very proud of that honour.

Dr. Boyle was pleased. Later, years later, she wrote to me, "I cannot tell you how much the sense of your moral support behind me has meant to me all these years." And if I ever wanted thanks that sentence gave it to me in overwhelming measure. As with other friendships, interests, causes in my life, I felt as if I had given a sovereign and received a gold mine in exchange.

I am always struck by the influence, power, and force of small movements. Somebody starts something, whether it be a typists' association in someone's bed-sitting-room, or gets a small meeting together for some lecture on some cause, and years hence people who never heard of that little beginning are moving to the measure of that thought.

In 1905 a young woman practitioner, Dr. Helen Boyle, considered that nervous diseases were receiving the wrong preventive treatment (a bottle of medicine and "Don't worry!"). With "£200 and faith," all she had, she started a hospital in a small house in a Brighton slum to provide the right preventive treatment. Nobody stopped her; it's a free country, isn't it? The hospital grew, and for the first fifteen years she personally collected most of the many thousands of pounds it cost. People came from many places to see that hospital's method of treating nervous diseases. Now there are similar hospitals scattered over the United Kingdom and in other countries. One of the most powerful impulses ever given to the modern methods of early preventive treatment for nervous disorders was given by that little effort founded in 1905 on £200 and faith.

If you have an idea, a cause, something that seems to you worth while, perhaps worth your heart's blood, don't be afraid to start it because its initial impulse must be so tiny. If it is worth while you will get help. Remember Emerson's great sentence: "The genius of life is friendly to the noble and in the dark sends them friends from afar."

## CHAPTER XIX

HERE'S a little homily on "nerve troubles" which you can skip if you like. And remember, I write as a layman.

When I first started on this hospital work I thought, like many other laymen, that mental disorder was incurable, something people never really got over. I was amazed as I went through the hospital records to find all the hundreds of patients that had left, able to take up their normal lives again—happy and prosperous and sometimes brilliant lives.

I also took it for granted that all forms of mental disorder were acts of God, and that they descended upon the just and unjust alike, without any particular rhyme or reason. I learnt with surprise that you cannot be born with mental disorder. You may be born with a tendency to instability, and, if life and circumstances put too great a strain on you, that tendency may become mental disorder or actual insanity in time.

Most human beings *are* born with a tendency to instability, just as doctors tell us that most human beings are born with a tendency to tuberculosis and that actually many of us are mildly tubercular in passing phases of ill-health, and get over it without knowing anything about it.

In the same way many people go through periods of mental and emotional stress and strain that might lead to insanity. We all know what it means to be down in the dumps—mild depression that may or may not have any very obvious cause, but gives a grey tinge to everything while it lasts. And then something pleasant comes along and we manage to cheer up. But if we could not have cheered up we should probably have had a "nervous breakdown." Nobody except those who have been through it know what a nervous breakdown really means; the days and nights of sleepless misery that turn life into a nightmare, with—to those who must work—the added terror, "Shall I ever get back to work?"

Fortunately for most of us, just the ordinary living of our daily lives cures many of our ills. A man once said to me that in all the works of anatomy that he had studied he had never found one highly important organ referred to, and that was "the forgetter." Our capacity to forget our troubles is little short of a miracle.

Many mental and nervous troubles can be very simply defined as unhappiness due to lack of adaptation to environment—the square peg in the round hole. Squaring the hole is the method pursued by the strong, and those people can generally be left to themselves. In fact, sometimes the hole requires the help—the strong person who finds himself in an uncomfortable environment so vigorously and forcibly adapts it to himself that he creates a little earthquake around him and disturbances in other people's lives.

Rounding the angles is the method pursued by the weaker, but that is more easily said than done. Square pegs in round holes find the hole too strong for them and yet cannot round their angles—and this is the situation that breeds every form of mental distress and unhappiness. With the strain of modern life—and oh! what a life it has been for millions from 1914 onwards—more and more square pegs are rammed into round holes. And then hospitals like ours have to come to the rescue and help to readjust some of these unhappy misfits who are brought through continual mental and emotional strain to actual insanity unless early preventive help is given them.

I have seen it stated that if there were proper provision in every general hospital for early treatment of nervous disorders an immense percentage of the inhabitants of the mental hospitals would never have had to be certified insane.

And this goes for the inhabitants of our prisons, Borstal institutions, and the like. Many of these misfits of our civilization would, with proper treatment by qualified psychiatrists attached to all our kindergartens, schools, and police courts, have been saved or helped. Incidentally, it is this proportion of the world's population that probably costs us all more money in maintaining them in hospitals, asylums, and prisons, more money in maintaining law and order as a protection for others against them, than all the rest of our population put together.

And this also goes for the thousands of cases of suicide and attempted suicide. The stories one reads in the newspaper of some apparently sensible person throwing himself into the river or under a train is always a story of nervous breakdown. The Coroner's inquest, with its verdict of "temporary insanity," often reports that the person was not known to be in any trouble, his financial affairs were all right, his home life happy. But suicide



is always the last chapter of a very long story of unhappiness that has reached the point at which the sufferer would rather face the terrors of the unknown than endure the intolerable miseries of existence any longer.

Unemployment, economic insecurity, is a terrible cause of unhappiness and consequent nervous breakdown and insanity—the vast proportion of all people out of work are continuously consciously and subconsciously unhappy over it, and the small proportion who are not, who “like being on the dole,” are so small they don’t matter. To workers who never have a sixpence in their lives unless they earn it first, who never buy anything for themselves or their families, necessities or small pleasures, without having to earn the money first, there is no greater terror than to be out of work. The terror is always present, and even in good times the worker knows that they *are* good times and that the bad times are waiting for him round any corner, ready to pounce out upon himself and the happiness of those he loves and who depend upon him.

Another very important point: when I started on this hospital work I didn’t realize the difference between mental deficiency and mental disorder—two things as far apart as the poles. Mental deficiency refers to people who are subnormal, who haven’t got the normal amount of brains—and you can’t put there what God hasn’t put there! They may be pathetic, but they are almost useless; and what we all want is that mental deficiency should die out. Mental disorder, on the other hand, very often attacks people who are super-normal, who are too quick and sensitive in their response to life. And it is the super-normal type of people who are the most valuable portion of our population. From these come the world’s geniuses, its artists, musicians, writers, and, above all, its leaders; we cannot allow the type from which they are drawn to fall by the wayside.

Nervous and mental disorders are the world’s most important problem—more important than cancer or tuberculosis cures, because they affect so many so fundamentally. Sick, unbalanced mentalities make war among nations, just as they make trouble in the community or in the home. The world’s happiness depends upon the world’s nerves.

And, as a last word, one of the best ways to keep that balance of mind, body, and spirit which we call sanity, mental health, is to have a good all-round respect and appreciation for yourself, the

more all-round the better. It is under-conceit—inferiority complex we call it nowadays—not over-conceit, that makes most harm in the world, with its desire, varying in intensity according to the individual, to wring some compensation out of the world. It's that horrible inferiority feeling that leads to so many personal quarrels.

The genuinely conceited person is rare, and the person with a real sense of superiority very rare indeed. I think I have only met one, Dame Henrietta Barnett. I saw quite a lot of her after the £25 cheque episode, and she seemed to me to be entitled to that superiority sense. I do not think she would have felt the necessity of making the great contribution to life that she did make—both through herself and through her husband, Canon Barnett—if she had not had that sureness of her own unusual qualities and consequent sense of responsibility for their use and service. And that is exactly what a thoughtful, all-round, correct appreciation of the contribution one is able to make to life does for one—develops one's sense of balance and responsibility.

If this chapter sounds rather like a speech—well, it is—one of my hospital speeches, made to raise a little money here and there for this most precious of hospitals.

## CHAPTER XX

To continue my career story. A few months later I went back to Thorold. Bitterly. It was Thorold and £500 a year and—I still felt—a possible future career. Or starting all over again elsewhere in my mid-thirties with my mother to support and post-war unemployment looming. Nor did Thorold show much pleasure at my return. But the Company's legitimate investment business had stopped dead during my absence, the type of success Thorold was having on the Stock Markets was a temporary thing, and his spasmodic attempts to replace me had completely failed.

A few months later Peace came. In 1919 Mr. Turner was demobilized and came back to the office with other Directors and male staff. In the City we were all in the Peace boom, working all hours of the night and day. The Company's legitimate investment business and clientele sprang into vigorous life again within a few

weeks of my return, and during the next twelve months I extracted £1,000 a year out of Thorold with the usual ultimatums.

But I was unhappy. Up to 1918 and the end of the slump years I had worked myself to a standstill for the Company with devoted loyalty, and had admired and was much attached to my brilliant, volatile, impossible chief; but I was now completely disillusioned. I have to be loyal to the people I work for or with, and cynical common sense acquired with a shock told me that further loyalty to Thorold was a joke. I was very unhappy. Not for me the place where one hates one's employer. But I didn't know what to do. £1,000 a year for a woman was unheard of elsewhere in the City in 1918, and still is.

In 1919 I was able to send my mother out to visit her youngest son in British Columbia, to her great joy, and in 1920, after being without a holiday for all the war years since 1914, I took two months' holiday. Yes, of course! I went to America. First class on the *Olympic*, with a £500 Letter of Credit, feeling like a millionaire. I've forgotten the name of the hotel in New York I stayed at. Modest enough, and I in the cheapest room. But it was the first time I had had a private bathroom in my life, and I almost lived in it and the sensation of uttermost luxury it gave me. I cannot now think how I had the courage or craziness to spend all that money in view of the nightmare uncertainty of my £1,000 a year with Thorold, but I expect I had got another attack of American nostalgia.

This time I went to New York (and it was during this visit in 1920 that someone in Wall Street said to me reflectively, "Some people think that in future China will be spelt J.A.P.A.N." I stared—in 1920). Then I went down to Georgia, Alabama, and New Orleans (that mixture of Versailles, Uncle Tom's Cabin—and Broadway), the Grand Canyon (oh! the Bright Angel Trail), Los Angeles for the first time, and the Yosemite Valley. Then to Victoria, B.C., to see my brother, and home across the Rockies to Montreal and Liverpool.

It was my first visit to the South. I struck one small Southern town on a Memorial Day, read the flaming editorials in the local papers on the war, and realized that to them the war meant the Civil War of sixty years ago, its strategy, its battles and defeats, fought out again on paper with passionate conviction. Lincoln, Grant, Jefferson Davis, Lee—figures of living controversy, "The

Army," that parade of old men in faded Confederate uniforms I saw marching through the summer streets. Coming fresh from Europe and the World War, it made one mentally blink as this bit of history flickered before one's eyes.

It was also my first visit to the Rockies, the ice-blue-green loveliness of Lake Louise and fierce bright peaks of Banff. But I am not at ease for long among great mountains, and the Rockies in that clear air are like the Mountains of the Moon: cold, menacing, with no friendly mist to soften their contours, only the smoke from forest fires—and a forest fire feels like nature turned gangster.

It was America in the Prohibition era, but that meant nothing to me personally, because I happen to be allergic to alcohol (yes, just that; if I'm cold, alcohol makes me colder! if I'm tired, a cocktail makes me more tired. If I need a pick-me-up I have to get it from sugar, glucose, chocolate). So I have no opinion worth offering on "the noble experiment."

Much had changed since my first visit in 1911, but all America was still home to me—or, perhaps, still the same impossibly fair mistress seen through the eyes of a lover forever enchanted.

Once again I was struck by the sense of easy nationwide equality, in spite of colour troubles, dollar standards, and the like. Most of the American standards that raise some above others are comparatively fluid and flexible, standards within the theoretical reach of the many, not those irrevocable whole-class priorities of birth, schooling, accent, and so on, of other lands. And, again, I realized the friendly emotional atmosphere that seems to raise one's own emotional temperature, releases one's emotional inhibitions, and makes one feel happier—at any rate for the moment, and at any rate for me.

## CHAPTER XXI

WHEN I returned it was to the same disordered office, the same impossible Thorold, and I wondered bitterly if I would always have to work under circumstances that induced so much stress and strain within me, so much inner conflict.

One day, realizing that I hadn't paid my periodic visit to my old chief, Mr. Ravens, for quite a time, I sauntered down to Tooley

Street and casually told him how I felt. He said—he was still the same gentle, kindly friend, in his sixties now: "I don't like to see you so unhappy. Why don't you and Mr. Turner start on your own?" I said, "We haven't the money; we couldn't put up more than three or four thousand pounds between us." He said, "How much would you need?" I said, "At least £10,000." He said, reflectively, "I think that a friend and I could arrange for you to have that amount behind you."

My head whirled.

Starting a financial house of my own had never occurred to me as a remote possibility. I rushed back to the office, exploded the idea to Mr. Turner, who was as sick as I was of the conditions under which we were working—the impossibility of predicting Thorold's attitude towards us from one day to another, or even his attitude towards the business. As someone else of the staff had said as he departed, "At any moment I feel that Mr. Thorold may chuck the whole thing up and start some patent way of curing kippers."

Thorold's Company was at this time a well-known financial house of excellent standing, yet the only stability the business had was the stability Mr. Turner and I had given to it; the only stable staff were my own staff in my own department.

A word about Mr. Turner and myself. We had worked together since 1912 to 1920, except for the war years, when he was in the Army. Thorold had done his best to keep us on unfriendly terms with each other, on his principle with all his staff of "divide and rule," and superficially he had succeeded, because no one in that office of jealous confusion felt any friendliness towards anyone. But Thorold was quite unaware that underneath Mr. Turner and I trusted each other, liked each other, and had worked through personal ups and down to a fundamental mutual confidence that made a partnership between us seem natural and obvious.

Mr. Ravens stood unwaveringly behind his quiet verbal offer. He met Mr. Turner, and liked him at once. He introduced his friend, who also liked us and offered capital. Mr. Turner told the kindly partner of one of the best-known houses in the City, who had known and liked us both for years, and who immediately offered more capital incognito while he introduced still another friend, senior partner of one of the leading provincial houses, who came in as still another partner. More offers of more capital came from other quarters, and both Mr. Turner and I were astonished to

discover how much goodwill and confidence we had created for ourselves in the City.

With heads still whirling, we picked a solicitor almost at random. Mr. Ravens' solicitor didn't happen to be in when we all called, so we went to my twin brother's solicitor—whom legal etiquette prohibits me from naming. And never did a new company make a more fortunate choice. Our Solicitor—at least he shall have a capital "S"—has been our guide, philosopher, and friend ever since, taking the deepest personal interest in the small company at its start, safeguarding our personal interests in every way as he drew the Memorandum and Articles, saying to us all as we sat in his office, "You and Turner are giving up jobs of a thousand a year to risk your little all and your future in this business. And I'm not going to let you do it unless I think it's safe. These other gentlemen have all made their positions. It's your futures I've got to think about."

That was true of three of our proposed partners, but not true of Mr. Ravens. He was risking half of the modest provision he had saved for himself and his wife in their old age, and they were both in their middle sixties. But I did not know that at the time or I should have felt bound to emphasize to him even more emphatically than I did the risks he was running in a business of which he knew nothing.

Our Solicitor also drew our partnership deeds that made Mr. Turner and myself life managing directors of our Company in such a watertight fashion that our Solicitor himself warned us, "Remember, this isn't a partnership; this is a marriage without the option of divorce. If you don't get on together there's no loophole of escape for either of you. *So you've got to agree to agree.*" A sentence that remained for ever in our minds. One of the greatest aids a new company or partnership can have is a first-class solicitor who regards friendship as part of the unwritten bond between himself and his clients. Our Solicitor has guided our Company's course through all our twenty-odd years' existence, and has regarded with a great personal pride the successes we afterwards achieved from the small beginning he legally sponsored with such anxious care.

We presented our resignations to Thorold. Handed them to him in a joint letter. We hadn't the courage to tell him verbally. Never did eyes flash such blue fire as his when he raised them to glare at us after reading our letter. Arguments, entreaties, exhortations

from him went on for weeks after, not directed towards keeping us on any reasonably permanent basis, but directed towards trying to split the embryo partnership. He quite naïvely said, "I never thought this would happen—that both of you would join forces. I always thought you were hardly on speaking terms." Adding, also naïvely, "If I could keep one of you I could do without the other!" Only on the last day did he vaguely suggest giving us a partnership. We had to tell him he was several years too late.

I was very fond of Thorold's Company. I had held it together all through the stresses of war; it was my baby, and I felt that I would never feel more attachment for my own Company than I felt for Thorold's Company, in which I had started as a complete financial novice eight years before. And however disillusioned with Thorold I was, I still remembered that five and a half years out of the eight had been the happiest, most stimulating years of my life up to that time. And even though I was leaving to start our own Company, I couldn't stand the thought of anything happening to my baby, my first financial love.

Thorold was at a complete loss for management, so I offered to come in and out every day gratuitously, see that clients' correspondence was properly handled, and, in other words, shield my baby from neglect. He accepted. "I shall be very grateful if you will," he said. The first time in eight years I had ever heard him use the expression "grateful" to an "employee." But at that moment I was hardly an employee. Needless to say, however, within a week we quarrelled, and he made it impossible for me to continue such a quixotic arrangement.

I parted with my staff, too, with very great regret. Most of them had started with me in their teens and had been with me through the war years. One lad named Johnson in particular I remember who remained with me because he was too young to enlist. He used to stand by my desk and look at me with such sympathetic sharing of my anxieties and successes, and in spite of his youth he was my right hand in handling the banking and transfer and technical end of the business. A week after I left in 1920 Thorold sacked him in one of his rages, and I was able to repay the debt of gratitude I felt towards the lad by getting him into one of the most famous merchant banking houses in the City, where he still is.

The girls, too, had been splendid to me. My goodness! The eternal vitality of girls, just girls, flappers in their teens, always

amazes me. During the war years, understaffed and overworked as we all were, they would work with the utmost cheerfulness until nine and ten o'clock at night. And then, when the older ones among us were dropping with fatigue, those girls would crowd into the dressing-room, spend half an hour swapping jumpers and trying on each other's hats, and depart in hilarious spirits for the last train or bus home—air raids or no air raids.

And so we started, Mr. Turner and myself, as joint managing directors, and four sleeping partners, in two small rooms with two typists. Of course we were an "outside House," because the Stock Exchange, like the Church—God and Mammon—refuses to admit women.

We had no further connection with Thorold beyond resolutely sending back to him certain clients of his Company who found us out and strayed in to see us. We were determined that there should be no legitimate grievance on his part that we had stolen his clientele, and we were quite sure that we could build up our own clientele. We heard that Thorold was trying to sell his Company for £60,000, the equivalent of the last year's profits (and during a great part of that year Thorold himself had been to-ing and fro-ing between New York and London, and Turner and myself, as usual, had been running the business). It was a not unreasonable figure if he could have offered continuity of management, but everyone knew that he had lost us both, and in the eyes of the City we were the management. Before we left we offered him £5,000 for it, and he refused with amused scorn.

And then, seven years after, we got an abrupt telephone call. Mr. Thorold wanted to see us. We told him to name his own time—and guessed the reason for his visit correctly. Would we take what remained of the business off his hands at any price? I knew Thorold's pride and vanity and realized what that telephone call must have cost him. As soon as I heard his footsteps I hurried out to greet him with every deference of manner I could assume. He strode in (one of his physical characteristics was a stride like a tiger). In five minutes we had offered, and he had accepted, £1,000 for the business, lock, stock and barrel, goodwill, name, clientele, everything. And the everything wasn't much. The business had been practically derelict from the day we left, seven years before. And in five minutes we deferentially ushered him out again. Our lawyers completed the matter.



That was my first experience, and I hope will be my last experience, of revenge, complete and overwhelming revenge.

During the last three years I worked for Thorold I had hated him with a wholehearted hatred such as I had never felt for anyone in my life, all the greater for the wholehearted loyalty and admiration I had built up within myself towards him during the first five years. The loyalty was a natural carry-over from my eight Tooley Street years, when loyalty towards my first chief, the gentle and considerate Mr. Ravens, was instinctive, and the admiration was given to Thorold for his brilliance, his incredible, volatile, mental brilliance.

But to my surprise the hatred vanished in ten minutes—the ten minutes in which Mr. Ravens suggested our own business and offered to make it possible. From that moment I realized that Thorold had no further place in my career, the nightmare blockage and stoppage he represented vanished, and with it the hate. And I was thankful. Hate, real hatred, is a corroding poison in one's veins, impairs one's physical health and nerves. It did mine. And though I never thought about revenge, never imagined that time would, in its petty cycle, bring revenge, full and complete, I suppose if I had thought about it I should have felt that revenge would be sweet.

But it was not sweet. It was humiliating. When Thorold walked into our office that day seven years after (and our offices were then larger than his had ever been), looking deadly pale, and he knew and we knew that there was nothing for him to do but accept any knock-out figure we would give for the business that had once been his and our pride, I never felt so humiliated in my life. We had not sought revenge, time had brought it to us, and we couldn't even make the gesture of refusing. He had to get rid of the business and we were the only buyers.

However, when the sentimental reactions of the transaction were over, Mr. Turner and I were glad to get the old business back into our hands. It had been as much our child as Thorold's. I, in particular, had nursed it through the dramatic war years. It had meant something to me that our own flourishing successful group of companies never meant. We immediately informed all the old clientele that the business was transferred to us and to our offices, and we were surprised and touched by all the kindly letters we received. After seven years many of them remembered us, came to

see us, renewed business with us, and we slowly built up the old Company to moderate success again, but of course seven years of neglect could never be made good.

Thorold finally established himself in New York, where, of course, he did well in his erratic way. A man of Thorold's brilliance was bound to do well anywhere, but his whole career was one of unstable successes. He died in 1941, and the truest epitaph would be Macaulay's remark regarding some public figure of his day: "Only such parts could buoy up such a character, and only such a character could drag down such parts."

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## CHAPTER XXII

OUR Corporation has had rather a remarkable career in its way. Starting in 1921 in two rooms with two typists, by 1929 it employed 140 people. It has lived to see three of its largest and long-established competitors all collapse in the 1929-31 slump and after, while it still modestly flourished. We emerged from the slump with our modest capital and reserves intact, while others wrote wads off their balance sheets.

Some of the things that brought our competitors down was "taking commitments." Mr. Turner and I were so convinced from the start that this was the fundamental danger rock on which we might sink, with our small capital, that we had a clause written in our agreement that neither of us could take commitments over £100 without the consent of the other in writing. And though I won't say this has always been strictly adhered to, one or the other of us has had the sense to remember and draw back when the other might be tottering on the brink of a tempting commitment; and the few occasions when we have been tempted and have taken commitments have been the occasions of our very few losses.

We eventually found ourselves, somewhat to our own surprise, not only in the front rank, but perhaps the leading Outside House at the time of the Bodkin Committee in 1936, to which I refer later in my story.

We finally helped to form the Association of Stock and Share Dealers in 1938, the Board of Trade giving every assistance in their power, and in doing so we were among the first Outside

Houses to make a real, perhaps a great, constructive contribution towards the democratic financial institutions of the country. That Association also, by the accident of my presence from the start on the formation body, was the first financial organization in the country officially to open the doors of finance to women on exactly the same terms as men.

So that is our story. Starting in two rooms, we rose to be the leading Outside House in the country, and in that capacity helped to do one of the most constructive pieces of work ever done by a financial house.

Of our four sleeping partners, three sold out their shares at a handsome profit some years after our start, and the fourth, Mr. Ravens, at eighty-four is still with us. He thankfully retired from Tooley Street and his unpleasant Danish employers some years later, when our success was obvious, and contented himself with a placid existence on the handsome income provided by his shares—the happiest years of his life, he always declared. He felt immense pride in our outstanding success, liked meeting and lunching and dining with our business connections, particularly our Continental banking friends, and he still comes down to our office once a week—my kindest business friend through nearly forty years.

Mr. Sefton Turner and I made an excellent combination. He has an expert understanding of all the technical side of finance, which I lack. His many years with one of the Joint Stock Banks as a young man gave him a comprehension of the principles of sound British banking practice which was invaluable when we had to exercise some control over banking connections abroad. He would have made a brilliant company lawyer, and his lifetime of experience of prospectus drafting, Table "A" Memorandum and Articles, etc., evokes great respect in the City. He has a genius for negotiation, his capacity for friendly compromise is inexhaustible, and, "in the Chair," he disarms everyone by his reasonableness.

The partnership between us has worked very fortunately, and he himself summed it up when he stated sixteen years later, in 1936, to the Bodkin Committee: "Miss Gordon Holmes and I have been associated for very many years; our particular qualifications were complementary to one another, and we formed the opinion, rightly as it proved, that with each operating in our respective spheres we could build a sound and profitable business."

My own qualifications for business are a mixed bag. I have been

trained to be accurate, definite, and simple. I can "see" figure totals at a glance, but I am no bookkeeper, and that romantic document known as a balance sheet generally baffles me. I am over punctual—in all my planning, appointments, and undertakings always ahead of time (but apt to make feverish mental arrangement long beforehand to deal with events that may not happen). And I am thorough—oh! I'm thorough! I can start hustling on January 1st, hustle straight through to December 31st without a stop—and on January 1st I can start hustling again.

I like and am good at creative, constructive work, constructive organizing. And I am a very good salesman (of things, people, and causes), chiefly because I have what I call an extension of the ordinary mind; my brains are a somewhat enlarged edition of the average brain. Hence in salesmanship I know what will appeal to the ordinary mind because that's what appeals to me.

In business relationships, not in personal relationships, I am on occasion a rapid and shrewd judge of character and can sometimes estimate during a few minutes' conversation whether a person can be trusted or his judgment relied on. I say, not in personal relationships, because like most people any emotion immediately colours my judgment, and if I like a person it often makes me quite blind to obvious defects.

A strong commercial sense is a great asset to an emotional person. It keeps one's dramatic impulses in check. It's lovely in bad-tempered daydreams to snap your fingers at the world and defy everybody. But, my God! If you ever dare try it in real life you pay through the nose for it. Hence after a few such experiences one's commercial sense generally comes in at the eleventh hour with the warning, "Take care! You'll pay for that!"

One of the best commercial axioms I know of is, "Don't tie a knot with your tongue that you can't untie with your teeth." And one of the best biblical precepts I know of is "Use thine enemies to thine own advantage." If properly followed it would prevent a lot of deadly quarrels that don't do anybody any good. In commercial life the eye for an eye business is no use. You generally lose your own eye in the process, and it's all very messy and unsatisfactory. But if you point out to yourself that some particularly detestable persons are of use to you and may be of more use, and if you wait until you are certain that you have extracted the last ounce of biblical advantage from them—seldom obtained by quarrelling—

before you break with them, by the time that certainty arrives you have probably forgotten all about them and indifference has displaced enmity.

By the way, people think business women must be handicapped because they are not always dining and wining and clubbing in the old-fashioned masculine style. But I think it was another business woman, Miss Alice Head, of *Good Housekeeping* fame, who stated in her reminiscences that she always insists on keeping business and social occasions very distinct. I agree. Do your business in your office with the parties round a table, and leave courtesies and compliments out of that picture. And, anyway, if you are in business you get far more lunch and dinner invitations than you can comfortably dodge, be you business man or business woman.

From the start business went well for us. Within a year or two our City connections became many, our clientele wide and well established, our standing with our bankers excellent.

Then at last I moved from my little £27 a year house in Chiswick into one at £80 a year, plus £400 down for decorations and fixtures. And the charming decorations were by Waring and Gillow and the fixtures included a luxury bathroom, with a warmed glass towel rail. And at once and for ever after those decorations represented or crystallized into my ideal home. Some years later, when I moved into a much more charming house in Bedford Park, I spent thousands of pounds in putting in C.H. and H. & C. from cellar to attic—only there weren't any cellars or attics—I had those decorations by Warings rigidly copied by Warings. And I've got them still, and they still delight me.

Then at last I replaced our basket chairs and odd bits of left-over furniture with a houseful of new furniture—including rose-coloured carpets. Rose-coloured carpets, that was another dream of mine. Just like the heroine I read of who amid the most serious and passionate occupations in life had always longed for just one thing—pale blue silk stockings and pale blue satin shoes! Where does one pick up these notions of ultimate luxury? Anyway, rose-coloured carpets were mine.

## CHAPTER XXIII

A FEW words about our staff, and about girls in offices and women in business. In pre-war days we had a large staff—about 140 at its highest in the boom years that ended in 1929. They were mostly girls taken straight from school at about sixteen to seventeen. They enjoyed being in our office; it was rather fun, and in our prosperous days they used to organize annual tennis tournaments and huge dances, backed by our subsidies, for themselves and their boy friends. And it was interesting to watch these unfledged school-girls develop into sensible juniors and finally into responsible young business women. One of them, Edna Wood, has been with me for twenty years, is my right hand, and has developed into an expert investment consultant.

I must have had many hundreds of schoolgirls through my hands in the last thirty years, and I evolved certain rough selection pointers which probably hold just as good for boys as for girls. Take your staff straight from school and do your own training. Even a few months in some other job may have damped or stifled that first enthusiasm, excitement, interest, and sense of importance over their first job, which are so invaluable as a basis for training. Talking always in pre-war terms, I have found the best types to be youngsters who had been through the elementary school, taken a scholarship at eleven years old for the secondary school, sat for matriculation or any other leaving examination at sixteen to seventeen, and then started out into the business world. Whether they pass the exam. is quite unimportant—they can fail for a hundred good reasons—but if their teachers won't even put them in for a school-leaving exam. you are running the chance of getting the school problem-children. They may do well in other ways of life, find their feet elsewhere, but office work, like school work, won't be their strong point.

When choosing staff don't bother about appearances, let say who will to the contrary. A dozen causes quite outside her control can give a youngster a poor appearance—untidy clothes, a nervous manner, and so on; and a combination of such causes, plus "interview fear," can make her seem like a mental defective. The great point is: Has she held any position of responsibility, leadership,

in school life? If she has been Games Captain of the School, Head Prefect or School Captain, take her without any more questions, and, from there, grade down to School Prefect, Form Games Captain, and so on. The point is not whether she is good at sports or scholastics, but whether in her school years, among her peers and equals, she has been chosen for leadership by those peers and equals. (If, as in some convent schools, the staff select their own school leaders, all the above is washed out. The so-called leaders may be good or bad or just teachers' pets.) Games responsibility seems to give a better scope for leadership than class responsibility. I have never played games in my life, so I don't know why.

Our staff all started at the bottom of the ladder, and each one was responsible for training an understudy before she moved up the next step. The seniors in charge of the correspondence, securities, filing, statistical, and other departments were responsible for picking out the girls they wanted for their own departments from the rest of the junior staff. This sort of "self-government" gave us an exceedingly responsible staff, young as they all were.

Girls get married, of course, sometimes in epidemic proportions. But we don't regard marriage as any bar to employing and training girls for business life. If you employ men they, too, leave you for hundreds of reasons, just as often as girls leave you to get married. How many men do you know who are in the same place at middle life as they started in as a boy? Probably none. In fact, it is so rare that the phenomenal individual himself recognizes its unusualness and proudly proclaims, "I've worked there, man and boy!" Sometimes our girls stay on after marriage, sometimes they don't; but we regard it as entirely their own affair as to which course they pursue.

When your staff are girls we find that one of the worries of a Staff Supervisor is the casual way in which they are kept at home to "help mother." Mother was feeling poorly, or dad was, or one of the family was, and when I expostulate, "I'm sorry, but this firm isn't out to provide free Home Nursing, it's out to provide you with a business education and possibly a career in return for work done," the poor girl looks helpless and says, "Well, it's mother, you see; she doesn't understand." Boys have the immense advantage that they are never kept at home to help dad.

Incidentally, I remember one of my staff who was going to be married telling me that she wasn't going to have any children, and

explaining, "I was the eldest girl in a family of seven, and ever since I can remember I've had to look after children. I don't want ever to have to look after children any more." However, she was a charming girl, and a few years later she seemed to have changed her mind because she trotted little Joan or Jean into my office with happy pride.

Many people still think that for women marriage and careers are incompatible, but really nowadays under modern conditions marriage without careers is almost incompatible. Every orphanage is filled with children of women who have lost their husbands, and who have had to hand the children over to charity. It is taken for granted that men should not marry and have wives and children unless they can support them. Why should we accept a lower moral code for women? The first thing adults should be able to do is to stand on their own feet and look after their own responsibilities; until they can do that they are adolescents.

My Corporation is often applied to for votes of admission to a large school for fatherless children for which my partner has acted as Steward in the annual appeal for funds. The applications are all from widows left with young children, and I am struck by the pathetic attempts these mothers have made to keep the home and youngsters together. But always the same untrained occupations—daily housekeeper, opening a little shop or business at which their poor inexperience soon fails, and so on.

Again, I was recently asked to help in getting an elderly lady a small pension from a well-known Benevolent Fund, and I made a rough analysis of the Annual Reports. The pensions list totalled over a thousand names, all elderly women from fifty upwards. More than 20 per cent. were widows, and of the remainder almost all had been engaged in what were termed "Home" pursuits—which means that they had had no professional or business training. Over and over again their circumstances were described as "Kept house for brother until his marriage, then post as lady companion." Another frequent description was, "Had aged and semi-invalid parents to look after." Oh, these invalid parents! And the sacrificial victims claimed in their names!

After reading that list of the fate of home workers, one couldn't help exclaiming, "Anything rather than the home! Anything rather than run the risk of such a life and such an ending!" I don't say there aren't any well-trained widows or spinsters with pro-



fessions at their fingers' ends, but *they* are not applicants on behalf of their children for Orphanage Schools, or applicants in their old age for a few pounds a year from a Benevolent Fund.

I always say that if I had girls and very little money to train them with, I would equip them with shorthand and typewriting and three well-learned languages, cheaply learned *au pair* during their teens. Then I would know that whatever gifts or abilities those girls developed they would always be able to earn a living—indeed, I have known girls travel round the world from China to Peru and from Vancouver to the Cape on just that equipment.

I am a great believer in business as a career, because business offers such a wide scope for all kinds of abilities. Parents love to get girls into all those blind-alley occupations, Banks, the Civil Service, and so forth, with the short hours, extremely limited pay and promotion, and intensely monotonous work, because parents say, "If a girl doesn't marry it is so safe." Safe for what—the lunatic asylum? These jobs are bad enough for men with their infinitely greater range of pay and promotion and the fact that they can marry and have a home life to offset the monotony of their work. But for women they offer none of these things.

Safety and enterprise are absolutely opposite terms, and safety is the last thing that young people should think about. The first and only thing that matters is a job that will give one the greatest scope for all one's powers, and, if possible, give one in the end that most satisfying thing in the world—success, spelt in whatever terms you like. There is no champagne like success, and women are likely to find many varieties of success in business and commerce.

## CHAPTER XXIV

I HAVE had thirty years of financial experience. The whole of the war years 1914-18, the post-war boom and slump, the boom that ran from 1925 to 1929, the slump from 1929 onwards—out of which the world just began to emerge only to be plunged into the pre-war slump of 1938—and the new war years of 1939 to the present time.

My Corporation has handled Government and Municipal and

other investment securities all over the world. We have acted as financial advisers to Continental banks; we have helped to finance public health services, gas and electricity companies, chemical and engineering works in places as widely different as England, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Germany, and South America. We have helped to finance the building of tens of thousands of houses in England, and furnished financial aid in building and servicing Garden Cities. I have lived for thirty years in the capitalist system, taken it for granted at first, had a full circle of revulsion against it later, and I have finally swung back to a doubting half-circle, realizing that there are many worse systems in the world of to-day than the capitalist system.

I don't believe that capitalism is in itself right or wrong. Like other systems of economics, medicine, education, or what not, capitalism may be the best available system at a given moment, or the worst. Other newer methods may be tried, found better, and the older methods scrapped—or the new methods may not be found all that was hoped, and the older systems are returned to while continued experimentation goes on for better ways. There is not necessarily any fundamental Q.E.D. in systems, theories, methods. There is no finality, economic or otherwise, in human affairs, or, if there is, we are too ignorant in our present state of development to know it.

I remember going down to Cardiff Museum just to look at that fine portrait of Robert Owen—the nineteenth-century English Ford, his medium the new material, cotton, instead of motor-cars. He proclaimed to astonished but profoundly impressed industrialists as he led them through his Lanarkshire exhibit that you can pay high wages, have model factories, model housing, model schools, *and* pay 16 per cent. Yes, you can—with a new medium that all the world wants and no competitors at the start.

But the world owes a great deal to speculators like Owen and Ford, who by their huge experiments set free all kinds of tangible and intangible by-products more valuable than their original speculation. Because, of course, people like Owen and Ford were speculators, adventurers. The world wouldn't be enjoying any of the comforts of to-day if some people at some previous date had not ventured to speculate in what were then new inventions. New countries have been colonized by speculators—for homes and happiness, not necessarily for precious metals. The uses of radium,

one of the greatest discoveries of mankind, have been made possible by speculators, people who have speculated for knowledge and paid with their lives. Speculation is another name for enterprise, and I applaud the bold remarks of Sir Percy E. Bates (Chairman of the Cunard Steamship Company), who said: "The measure of the risk is the appropriate measure of the reward. . . . Personally I hope it will always be so, for safety means but a form of dullness quite ill-suited to the daring habit of mind which has put mankind and not one of the lower animals or the more scientific insects on top of the planet."

Far too much and too special importance is placed on money. It isn't a possession in a class by itself. If people like to collect money, is there any more reason to prevent them doing so than collecting postage stamps or pictures? Money is just another possession and subject, like all possessions, to wear and tear and changes of fortune. People who buy pictures (oh, shades of Lord Leighton!) or securities may have the rueful experience of being unable to sell them for anything later, or—more rarely—the joyful experience of selling them for much more than they paid.

Incidentally, I've never discovered that money, just money, can do very much. We all have our price—but the price is seldom in terms of money. People can be bribed through their emotions far more easily than through their pockets. People will do things for you because they like you—or won't because they dislike you. If your staff work well for you, it is partly because they like you, and not only because you pay them well. People will do things far more often for love for a cause or love for a person representing the cause, or for vanity, prestige, fear—all kinds of emotions, but seldom for just money.

Incidentally also, I wish people who swallow systems of economics whole (Marx, Henry George, or anybody else) would remember that all this talk of what is or is not capital or assets generally leaves out the capital and assets of brains and character. And that is why all men are not born free and equal; they haven't the same starting capital and assets, equality of brains and character.

But I am not really very interested in capitalism or any other economic theories as theories. So if this chapter has bored you to read it has rather bored me to write it, and we can both sympathize with each other. I'll end up by pointing out that the graduations

of capitalism are infinite and infinitesimal—and that's the only moral of the following little story.

Winifred Holtby, in *Time and Tide*, once wrote a paragraph about a man she got into conversation with; he was selling white heather in the street. He told her he had owned a small florist's shop, but illness had finished his tiny reserves and left him penniless. He asked her, it was in the depths of the trade slump, if she thought business was picking up, and said: "It's when these business men have to keep using up their reserves to keep going that the trouble starts. That's their capital, and when their capital's gone that's the end." And to illustrate his point he said: "Now, if I had five pounds behind me I'd be a different person—I'd have capital." I sent Winifred Holtby £5, and said: "This man says he would be a different person with £5; give it to him." She found him again, gave him the £5, and when he took it he exclaimed, "Now I can go into the winter violet trade!" He told her that white heather was the most desperate down-and-out form of street flower-selling, but the only possible one if you had no money. White heather wouldn't sell, but it would keep—you made wretched money, but you risked small losses with your pathetic stock-in-trade. Winter violets were the aristocracy of the street flower-trade. They sold well at good profits, but they were so perishable that your fragile stock-in-trade must be turned over at once, and only a man with a little capital behind him could afford to risk the occasional bad day, the possible losses for the greater profits. When he exclaimed, "Now I can go into the winter violet trade!" that meant to him graduating into the capitalist class. She said he looked a different person already, and without mentioning names she arranged to meet him a year later—but, alas! a year later Winifred Holtby was dead, so I never heard what happened to our winter-violet capitalist.

## CHAPTER XXV

Now I come to another turning point in my career, small thing though it seemed at the time. In 1923 an American organization of business women's clubs created a foothold over here, the Soroptimist Clubs (now the Federation of Soroptimist Clubs of Great

Britain and Ireland), formed on the same plan as the Rotary Clubs for men. They were classification clubs; membership was restricted to one representative, generally the leading representative of every business or profession. Therefore, by their basis they could never be very large numerically, but they could be very distinctive. The first and founder British Club, the Greater London Soroptimist Club, was formed in 1923. Lady Falmouth was the first President, and the membership included some of the leading gainfully employed women in London. Other clubs sprang up all over the Provinces, then on the Continent, and their four-year Conventions, held in different countries each time, brought the leading business and professional women in Europe together as such almost for the first time in European history.

I was asked to join as a representative of women in finance, and for the first time since 1912 I found myself mixing with other business women. It was a revelation to me of the strides women had made since the 1904 period when we formed the tiny Association of Clerks and Typists. And that is all we could have formed in 1904 because then there were only women clerks and typists.

I had been so long a lone figure in the City, my only interests the—to me—absorbing interests of the City (apart from my Hospital and Medical Committees), that I received a shock of happy surprise at finding myself surrounded by women who had pioneered as successfully in other directions of trade and commerce and the professions and public life as I had in finance. I rediscovered women after years of daily living in a world of men. I was delighted with the discovery, because I had not encountered women of that calibre and distinction in numbers before. I like women, I have always liked women, but circumstances and, above all, my fundamental social shyness had kept me out of touch with other women of my generation.

I was very interested and impressed to note how many women directors of business houses there were. Names I had known and had taken for granted were men's names were now revealed as women. I noticed with admiration that many of these women had large staffs and handled their staffs admirably. If I had ever had a tendency after my successful years in the City to regard myself as something unique, joining the Soroptimists stopped it.

But it brought an important element into my business and personal life, publicity. Hitherto I had shunned any form of personal

publicity like the plague. I felt it would be most embarrassing and would disturb my excellent relations with my men colleagues; that it would be bad form and most undesirable. Therefore no one knew that there was a woman doing the sort of work I was doing as a joint managing director of my own financial house in the City. The public announcements that occasionally included our Directorate deliberately hid my sex in my name.

I lightly joined the Soroptimist Club, and after joining was told that one of the rules was that all new members must stand up and give an account of their jobs and themselves. (In those days we met every Thursday for lunch at the Criterion—it was all very American and very interesting.) I stood up and held forth on my job and my years in the City. I didn't know that reporters were present. But I knew it that night.

That evening all the newspaper placards in London broke out in a rash "Woman Stockbroker tells her Secrets!" And when I reached home it was to find reporters and photographers camped on the doorstep. For weeks after that in my home and in my office the telephone never stopped ringing and newspaper people with cameras surged in and out of the office. I put up a frightened and feeble resistance to it at first, but one girl reporter got my simple vanity with the remark, "Oh, but you are a public character now, you know!" Which I lapped up—and after that it was easy. Soon I stopped feeling embarrassed and began rather to like it. And to my surprise my men colleagues, instead of resenting it, liked it too. They felt quite proud of possessing the only "woman financier" in the City. I began to get a bit of a swelled head.

It probably doesn't do any human being any harm to get an occasional touch of swelled-headedness—though it says much for the fundamental fineness of a character that can never be so touched—and I definitely believe it is very good for the average woman. It lifts temporarily the age-old inferiority complex that practically all women suffer from, or certainly the women of my generation. I have met a few young women among the present generation, well-educated, good-looking, well-dressed, holding down fine executive positions, who seem to be devoid of that inferiority complex, and I envy them their natural poise as human beings and not as women. That's the way it should be and will be. And of course I myself seem the same to older women. I remember during the last war an elderly client coming in to see me, twenty

years older than I was, and saying suddenly in the middle of her business consultations with me, "You don't know how I envy you! Here am I, a widow with a crippled daughter to support and nobody to teach me how to do it. You are all the things I would like to be. Your life is life."

However, the publicity went on and on and echoed back from half round the world, and I began to get used to it. And about 1925 I went on a trip, half pleasure, half business, to South America and the States. And the publicity followed me there from Buenos Ayres all across the Andes to Valparaiso, up through the States across the Rockies to New York. I was interviewed and photographed and paragraphed and lunched and dined and wined, till I came home feeling like the Prince of Wales. I had got a good old attack of swelled head.

But the sequel was interesting. A little later we interested ourselves in certain Continental banking business, notably on behalf of one of the oldest and best-known Hungarian Banks. The Hungarian Directors came to London to see us. They were very anxious to have a British Director, and of course they asked my partner to accept that Directorship. I realized that if I had been a man, equally of course, they would have asked me, because as Sales Director it happened that their negotiations had been with me, and I had been chiefly instrumental in arranging the finances for their Bank. But I had got this attack of swelled head on me, and it gave me enough Dutch courage to up and say that I wanted to be a Director jointly with my partner, so that we could each in turn represent the British interests at the Budapest meetings as might be most convenient. Those Hungarian gentlemen were even more taken aback than English Bank Directors would have been. A woman Bank Director in Hungary! But what could they do? They knew I was chiefly responsible for providing the finance they needed. They could but say, "Charmed, we're sure," with very glum faces.

Shortly after that I went to Budapest. I think I was almost the first representative of any London financial house to appear there after the war. In later years almost all the leading financial interests in London from, I think, the Bank of England downwards sponsored the various Budapest banks. But our Bank was actually the first Hungarian Bank to receive permission to deal in its securities on the London Stock Exchange. The publicity burst out

in the Budapest papers more violently than ever. "British blue-eyed woman Bank Director!" etc. And our Bank discovered that all the other Hungarian banks were bitterly envious of them. They had not only got a British Director, but a British woman Director who was getting the Bank more publicity than a man would have got, so our Hungarian Bank was impressed and quietly delighted.

Which also had its sequel. On the last day of that first visit of mine the interpreter brought in a woman I had not seen before, and through him she said she wanted to thank me for all I had done for her. It appeared that for many years she had been doing such important work for a company controlled by the Bank that if she had been a man she would have been made a signatory. As it was deemed impossible in Hungarian banking circles to have a woman signatory, she did the work and a man was appointed the signatory. But as a result of my appointment as a Director of the Bank, and the impression my visit had made, the Bank had decided to go "all feminine" at once, and they had that day made her a signatory to that company. And as I stood there listening to that woman thanking me, I realized that all this had come about because I had joined a business women's club in London.

What happened about that swelled head? Oh, somebody pointed it out to me, I recognized its truth, roared with laughter, and it vanished. Since then I have always remembered that quite pleasant period of swelled-headedness, endeavoured to recognize the symptoms when they recurred, and laughed myself out of them at the start.

## CHAPTER XXVI

LIFE went on very pleasantly and successfully for me, and included a great deal of travelling. In 1925 I made a rapid and interesting trip to South America—Rio, Buenos Ayres, across the Andes to Valparaiso, up the coast to Panama, and home across the Canadian Rockies and New York. But when I glance over my South American notes they just echo like the pages of a dusty history book. Of all the people I met and talked to, only one Dutchman on board on the way out mentioned such a possibility as another European war—and he spoke of it as a certainty. "A Dutchman on board



says England has done magnificently, but that she is struggling against her inevitable decline—that Germany will gradually get all the markets of the world, that Germany and Greece will fight again in ten to fifteen years as soon as Germany gets money, which he says she will get from America. By the bye, he is an engineer, and in a recent contract for locomotives he says the English price was £130,000, the Dutch price was £110,000, and the German price was £69,000—the last probably subsidized by the German Government.”

But in 1925 another World War seemed very far away. The whole of the West Coast of South America was convulsed over the Tacna-Arica dispute between Peru and Chili. The U.S.A. had just given a decision in Chili's favour, subject to a plebiscite. In Arica itself, the Chilian border town, the Chilian delegates had just landed as our ship arrived, the U.S.A. Mission was coming the next week, and the Peruvian delegates later. “The Chilian lot are quartered at one end of the Town, the Peruvians at the other, and the U.S.A. in the centre—to prevent fighting between the delegates.”

Other notes read: “*Brazil*: Mr. Williams in Rio told me that Brazil had untold riches in her iron ore, but won't allow development because she wants to do all her own smelting herself. She has no suitable coal, but would have to import it from the U.S.A. or Europe, which would make the iron thus smelted too expensive to compete with imported iron. Hence the situation is at a deadlock. The coffee position is serious on account of the foreign exchange position. Brazil cotton has a possible future. I hear Brazil's deposits of oil shale emphasized, so far untouched.”

“The Argentine has got the world's beef and bread right there; it doesn't have to do anything about either. Consequently, it's very well off and very unprogressive. But the whole Argentine population is only 8,000,000, and in spite of the outrageous wealth of a few of them I was told the number of really well-off people is so small that they could not attempt, for instance, to run really luxurious boats on the Buenos Ayres service such as they have on the New York service because there would not be enough wealthy people to pay for it.”

“Chili is backward; her population is so small, 3,500,000, and she won't allow immigration, her cry being ‘Chili for the Chilians.’ They are taking the synthetic nitrate competition dead seriously;

they say that natural nitrate must be prepared to come down in price to the synthetic level."

"*Peru*: Cotton, coal, metals, minerals, Peru has them all. President Leguia told me that in five years' time Peru would be exporting  $2\frac{1}{2}$  million bales of cotton. He spoke of an enormous irrigation scheme. The President emphasized the unlimited coal supply and the need of capital to develop it. I hinted to him that the defaults in the past on Loans were disappointing to Peru's friends in England. At first he affected to be hardly able to remember the details of such defaults, but his sudden smile as I pressed him on the point showed he knew all about them all right. In any case it was almost impossible to drag the President or anyone else off the Tacna-Arica question, the convulsing problem of the hour. Leguia, I am told, is doing for Peru what Diaz did for Mexico. An American on board says Leguia is as big as the biggest man in history; he will make Peru the most powerful nation in S.A. unless he is assassinated first." (He was.)

"Lima, the capital of Peru, is full of brand-new buildings, motor buses and motor roads cutting straight through the Temples of the Incas. I asked someone why greater care had not been taken to preserve these remains—the ground is littered with bits and pieces of Inca pottery, little lamps, vases, for any tourist to pick up. He said: 'Cases and cases of this Inca junk were sent back to New York, but the trouble is in Peru if you scratch the ground you find an Inca.'"

"The American showed me an interesting report his staff had just got out about Colombia—imports, exports, finance, minerals, rivers, railways, everything. Says country is so wealthy, with quantities of oil, etc., that even its rotten government can't stand in the way of its successful progress."

"It is curious, by the way, how all these Dutch, Spanish, and Italians on board seem to regard South America as the Eldorado of the future. They all seem to think, whatever doubts there may be of Europe, or even of the U.S.A., there can be no doubt about the golden prospects of South America."

"*Canada*: When I was in Canada the Deputy Minister of Mines seemed to think very seriously of the question of oil from coal as a possible solution of the World's coal problems, and most of all of Great Britain's. Told me he regards the coal position in England as very grave indeed; says the British mines are greatly behind in

modern machinery. Says the Canadian coal mines are having a very bad time as the result of overproduction from the U.S.A., which undersell by such a large margin that the Canadians are pushed right out of the coal market, even in Canada. Everything in Canada seems in a very bad way, while just across the border the U.S.A. seems to be going crazy with money—never saw so many signs of money in my life.”

It was after my visit to America in 1925 that we considered opening a New York branch. At that time it was in theory the logical thing to do. Mr. Turner went over to New York, found business friends gladly offering backing, brought back a potential New York manager to train in our office. But it ended in nothing. The potential manager, £1,500 a year free of tax and passage paid both ways, was terrified by the efficiency of our office, and after a few months we said goodbye and shipped him back. The network of contradictory regulations governing forty-eight states (and this was eight years before Roosevelt's New Deal) were one vast headache. And we realized again what we had known before, that Wall Street ran on a very different and very much tougher, rougher moral code than London—in fact, it seemed to us no moral code at all. Our European Continental business was increasing, moreover, and kept our organization working at capacity. So we finally, though reluctantly, abandoned the New York idea.

## CHAPTER XXVII

My partner and I each made business visits to Budapest, Roumania, Jugoslavia, and Germany several times a year to watch over our interests in all those countries. We acted as the London Issuing House for several Continental banks and for a few German Municipalities. These investments proved good investments for many years, some of them right up to the outbreak of war. This is particularly true of our Hungarian bank, which was an old-established Bank with country branches and an unbroken record of dividends paid on its Ordinary Capital for some thirty-five years. Its bonds were legal Trustee Securities in Hungary, and it conducted itself as a model of what a bank should be according to Continental tradition.

Continental banks traditionally undertake the financing and

even the management of commercial undertakings. Both my partner and myself (and my partner in particular, since Mr. Turner was brought up in the traditions of the British Joint Stock Banks) urged an attitude more in accordance with British banking practice.

In our view, which was the British view, the proper functions of a bank are firstly and lastly to safeguard the savings of its depositors, and emphatically never at any time to take part in the management of commercial and industrial undertakings. If depositors, large or small, place their savings in a bank they should at all times be able to withdraw those deposits. It is no justification to say that their deposits have been lost because the bank had decided to finance some undertaking which appeared a sound and desirable investment for its depositors' funds, and proved not to be so. Depositors should be left to choose and take their own risks with their money; it is no part of a bank's functions to take those risks for them. The first duty of a bank is to its depositors; no possible gains or larger shareholders' dividends can justify risk of loss to the depositors. Our Bank gave very thoughtful consideration to our views, which were backed by our English Chartered Accountants, who also made annual visits; and under our advice it gradually withdrew from its commercial commitments and managements, and thereby greatly strengthened its liquid position when the depression came and afterwards the war years.

When I first went to Budapest in 1917 I met the Board of Directors, and it was pointed out to me that they were a mixed group of Jewish and Christian gentlemen, all of excellent standing. It was the first time I had had my attention drawn to this distinction of creeds, and it seemed to me more surprising than important. I didn't recognize the writing on the wall, anti-Semitism, particularly as the Jewish gentlemen who so ably helped to conduct the affairs of our Bank won our immediate and lasting admiration and respect.

I may add I see no reason for the apologies or accusations that are put forth regarding the liberal lending to Germany and other European countries after the war. Europe had to be reconstructed. Schools, housing, communications, sanitation, had not only to be reconstructed after the war, but made a great deal better than they had been. Just as we should have had a Civil War if Hoover had not stepped in and fed Europe, so we should have had economic

paralysis if other parties had not stepped in and tried to finance Europe. The torrent of finance poured into Europe started the wheels of commerce and industry turning, spread employment, got countries like Czechoslovakia on their feet, rehabilitated Belgium, Poland, and other stricken nations, and got the medical, educational, and other public services of Europe going again. And the second World War was not only not foreseen as possible, but was foreseen as impossible to most of us—for impossible it seemed to the pre-1933 and pre-Hitler era of ordinary people. We had all suffered too much in the war years of 1914 to 1918 ever to allow such world-wide insanity again.

So we thought then. And we were not criminals for thinking so and acting so. We were not even fools. We were just human beings, making no claim to be crystal-gazers. In fact, the subsequent mania for astrology and kindred arts is due to the desperate sense of the sheer inadequacy of human intelligence in grappling with the so-called obvious happenings of the future. Obvious they may be to some people. Most things that have—or haven't—happened in the world have always been obvious to some people. Useless saying why didn't we listen to them. Listen to whom? When? "If hopes are dupes, fears may be liars."

I remember so clearly listening in 1916—because in 1916 I was young enough and inexperienced enough to be deeply impressed—to a group of very able City men casually but thoughtfully discussing "after the war." In 1916 they declared with one accord that after the war there would be no City or commercial life left, or civilization left as we knew it. That the only people who would be able to continue an existence "after the war" would be those who were fortunate enough to have a small farm or piece of land which they could "work with their own hands" and thus in some primitive way support themselves and their families.

Well, what actually happened after the last war, and will happen after this war, was greater industrialization, mechanization, urbanization, than ever before, an intensification of civilization as we know it. Both World Wars have given a tremendous impetus to mechanization, and there is less likelihood than ever before of the world reverting to "working with their own hands."

The grass may grow in the streets of London, as forecast by Wells and other authorities, but it will only do so because human brains, imagination, idealism, plus machines, have found pleas-

anter places to live in (pleasanter than darling London?). It is moving towards easier and happier conditions for the majority, with that majority increasing all the time, until, at last, as Alan Monkhouse put it in one of his thoughtful phrases, "Instead of only the fortunate having the good things of life, people will have to be very unfortunate to be without them."

Like many people, I have ideas on post-war reconstruction, and they are comparatively simple. Don't reduce Income Tax. Stop unemployment before it starts by diverting the same volume of war-time revenue into peace-time production. Aim at luxury living for everybody from war-time level revenues.

Promote at top speed production of housing, motor cars, clothes, household gadgets, telephones, radios, refrigerators, in every home. Necessaries and luxuries of every description at low mass-production prices for a population who, at the moment of the proclamation of peace, will have plenty of war-time employment money and will have had almost no war-time spending—earnings repletion and spending starvation. Reconstruct, recondition, overhaul everything we have, and construct everything we haven't. Schools (and they can do with it), houses, flats, gardens, playgrounds, theatres, public buildings, roads, garages, railways, trains, ships for cheap cruises, planes for cheap and, I hope, transatlantic flights. Keep the coal mines going at full production peak by giving all houses in all our cities and towns hot and cold water and central heating from central municipal services. If we can have cold water on tap in our houses all over the country, why not hot? And if hot water, why not hot-water heating and get rid of the nightmare of the poorer classes—the English winter? Keep the women in employment by giving them the most labour-saving homes and the best crèches and nursery schools in the world. Get now blue-prints from other countries as to how they do these things—from America about their municipal central-heating services, from Sweden about their splendid play-schools.

Find out what countries have the best educational, health, and welfare services in the world. Have an orgy of public and private spending from revenues deliberately kept at their war-time peak to make Britain immediately the best-housed, best-fed, best-clothed, best-educated, best-travelled, and best-amused nation in the world. All of this can be done, and done immediately, if our Government will resist the temptation to reduce war-time taxation. Of course,

huge plans involving huge expenditure inevitably involve some waste—but far better waste money power than waste work power.

We shall help other countries as well as ourselves by such a programme. If we have full employment and prosperity here, we shall have a surplus to help others to similar standards of living. If we have millions of unemployed here, we shall have deficits, not surpluses—and you can't help people from deficits.

Someone says that if everyone in the world had a little more than enough to eat, then, only then, might we get peace on earth. Expand "to eat" into "to have," "to know," "to wear," "to enjoy" (what Greek philosophers called "the good life"), and aim at this kind of world peace for victors and vanquished alike. Dictators and tyranny flourish in misery—not in prosperity.

And here's an afterthought. If we have got to have unemployed, why not give them enough to live on, not merely to exist on? I remember a casual conversation I had with a public official some years before the war in a northern district. He told me they had just started a heavy road-building plan, but that their thousands of unemployed in the North mostly belonged to the shipbuilding industry. This meant that they had been out of work for ten years, and as a result of those ten years of semi-starvation they were physically incapable of the hard work required, and the authorities had had to bring over Irish labourers. Unemployment pay should be sufficient to keep people physically and mentally and psychologically fit—which means sufficient food for body, mind, and spirit. Half-starved wrecks are a costly and unnecessary by-product of unemployment, which fill our hospitals and gaols.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

IN 1936 the Board of Trade set up a Committee (the Bodkin Committee) to examine the position and activities of Outside Houses. We took a very serious view of our responsibilities, and as soon as the formation was announced we wrote to the Committee setting forth our recommendations as to the proper regulation and functioning of Outside Houses, offering to give evidence, information, and assistance. We also repeatedly circularized our recommendations to the hundreds of outside dealers in the United

Kingdom, inviting their comments and suggesting that they too should offer assistance to the Board of Trade.

Our suggestions for the most suitable methods of preventing public losses resulting from fraudulent Outside Houses included registration of all Outside Houses with the Board of Trade, accompanied by a deposit of £5,000, to be forfeited if convicted at any future time of criminal actions, and prohibition by law of all deferred payment, margin, option, or "cover" business.

We, my partner and myself, eventually went before the Committee to give evidence. We began by handing to the Chairman, Sir Archibald Bodkin, many documents, including our balance sheets, and a complete analysis of some twenty pages showing all securities handled by us during the sixteen years of our existence from 1921 to 1937. We stated that our books covering the entire period were open to inspection.

In our evidence we stated: "As an illustration for the necessity for Outside Houses as part of the financial machinery of the Country it is only necessary to mention that there are in Great Britain 130,000 Joint-Stock Companies, and of these only 15,000 are Public Companies, of which only a proportion are known from the point of view of Official Quotation, or permission to deal in their Securities on the London Stock Exchange. There are, therefore, thousands of Joint-Stock Companies in Great Britain in which large amounts in the aggregate of the capital of the general public are invested for whose securities there is no market whatever except through Outside Houses. Consequently, in the event of death, or the necessity for any other reason to realize Shares or Debentures in such Companies, Shareholders or Debenture holders would be unable to realize their Securities, or would be compelled to accept whatever offer may be made to them, were it not for the machinery provided by the reputable Outside Houses to find Investors prepared to purchase at reasonable prices."

I was the only woman to appear before the Bodkin Committee. They were very nice to me and offered me a cup of very good tea. My partner, Mr. Sefton Turner, gave the evidence—excellently, reasonably, logically, as always.

I was there really because I was asked by the women's organizations to represent the women's interests. It had been suggested that the Bodkin Committee might in the end recommend that all finance houses must join a Stock Exchange. The Soroptimist



Federation had made a rapid survey, found that no Stock Exchange admitted women to membership, found that most of them categorically refused to admit women, while others quibbled, "Not been asked to do so, couldn't say." (Of course, Dublin Stock Exchange admitted women, had had a woman member for years, but then Dublin has always been in the forefront where women are concerned.) Therefore, at the appropriate moment when we were before the Committee I interposed: "If it is the intention to recommend that all finance houses should join a Stock Exchange, I have been asked to request that this Committee stipulate that all Stock Exchanges shall admit women. Otherwise you put me out of business, and other women like me, because at the present time the London Stock Exchange does not admit women, and a recent survey shows that no other Stock Exchange in this Country admits women either." The Vice-Chairman of the London Stock Exchange rose to his feet and said: "The London Stock Exchange is a private Club. If women want that sort of club, let them form one of their own." But the courteous Chairman, Sir Archibald Bodkin, replied to me: "Your point is well made, and we will see that it is given due consideration in our recommendations."

The Committee published their extremely able Report in the summer of 1937, and emphasized that "We are satisfied that the majority of outside brokers are honest, and we see no justification for suggesting that outside brokers or dealers as a class should be prevented from carrying on business or unduly restricted therein. They transact lawful business and carry it on without substantial ground for complaint, and, indeed, are, in regard to certain types of stocks and shares, of considerable use to the public."

The Committee also stated: "To impose upon outside brokers and dealers, a good many of whom do not advertise in the sense of broadcast circularization, a prohibition of communicating with others than those whose names appear on their books as having had dealings with them is not, in our opinion, necessary or expedient, having regard to the services in the realization of lesser-known securities which outside brokers and dealers of good class are able to give. Moreover, to do so would be to inflict very considerable loss on firms whose extensive clientele has been built up on fair dealing."

One of the notable proposals visualized by the Bodkin Committee was the formation of an association to control the unattached

brokers and dealers throughout the Country. As a result, and very shortly after the Bodkin Report was issued, our Corporation, with the assistance of other leading Outside Houses, formed the Association of Stock and Share Dealers which was incorporated in July, 1938, and formally declared by the Board of Trade to be a recognized association of dealers in securities for the purposes of the Act. My partner, Mr. Sefton Turner, was appointed Chairman. The objects as set forth in the memorandum included: "To do all such things as may be considered necessary to maintain a high standard of conduct in the transaction of business in Stocks, Shares, Bonds, Debentures, units of unit trusts, and all other kinds of marketable securities, by persons who are not members of recognized Stock Exchanges in the United Kingdom, and particularly to ensure that such standard shall be observed by its members."

Of the proposed Association at the time of its formation the *Financial Times* remarked: "The fact of membership should be almost as strong a guarantee of dependability as the possession of a seat in one of the recognized Stock Exchanges."

Ten years before, as early as 1926, we had approached certain of the leading Outside Houses suggesting some such organization, but had been met with unqualified refusal. Hence, when we were asked by the Bodkin Committee during our evidence whether we considered it possible to organize the Outside Houses into a voluntary association, we had stated emphatically that we did not consider this possible. We pointed out that interests, types of business, even standards of conduct, were so diverse as to render any unification of practice probably impossible.

However, under the skilled, tactful, firm handling of the Board of Trade officials, all the difficulties and diversities we foresaw were smoothed out, rival interests conciliated, compromises effected, and when the Outside Houses finally went into the Association we were all on terms of goodwill and friendliness towards each other. To our admiration, what we were not able to do among ourselves the Board of Trade officials effected in a few months.

Incidentally, our close contact over the matter with the Board of Trade officials for several years from 1936 onwards was a revelation to us of the efficiency that exists in some Government Departments, the character, integrity, and intelligence that some Civil Servants display without the stimulus of the rewards and recognition that men of such calibre would get in outside life.

## CHAPTER XXIX

BEFORE going on to the next turning-point in my career, I want to say a little about the interests and hobbies that had their influence on my later life, my mid-forties and fifties, my life outside the office and the business world. Here are some of them.

Pictures, the revelation of pictures, came to me very late in life. That was a world of mental and emotional beauty I was blind to until I was in my middle forties. I had influenza, went down to Brighton to convalesce, dragged myself out for my first walk on a wet day as dismal as my feelings—you know influenza—stopped outside a picture shop in the Western Road for the sake of stopping, ambled into its deserted interior for the sake of sitting down, and sat, just sat, with bored exhaustion while the proprietor, quite mistaking my motives, turned over portfolio after portfolio of large and beautiful Medici reproductions. They were world-famous masterpieces, but they came completely new to my eyes at that moment. I suddenly felt, thought, said, "Why! This is beauty!" with a sense of receiving revelation. Amazed and excited, influenza forgotten, I started going through all the portfolios again—and chose some £20 worth that I felt I couldn't possibly live without.

I chose a very mixed bag: a lovely little Corot, one of Titian's proud, pale, doomed young men, Le Brun's "Boy in Red" (a mistake that one, my eye caught by the colour), Whistler's "Blue and Silver" Nocturne, Rembrandt's "Girl with Broom," Constable's "Cornfield"—which last among them all has proved an everlasting delight. These were all hackneyed enough, but brand new to me. (What does the word "hackneyed" mean, by the bye? It always seems to be applied to things one likes, but which other people rather despise.) I hung all these around my office with infinite satisfaction. Years later I added Van Gogh's "Sunflowers" and "Approaching Storm," most beautiful German reproductions, and was very interested to watch the reactions of business men when they came into my room. My foreign business visitors knew all about Van Gogh, of course, and admired the beauty of the reproductions. My British friends for the most part didn't know them, and brought to them the same fresh tribute of admiration that was all I too had to offer. On one occasion, after a business lunch at the Lombard, an argument about "those pictures in your office" de-

veloped, and we brought back a little group to critically examine the pictures and discuss their points.

Up to that bout of influenza picture galleries simply meant a headache to me. Now I haunted galleries, discovering all the schools—Italian, French, Spanish, Dutch, Flemish, British. I remember a single day in Paris when from 9 in the morning to 5.30 at night, when the galleries closed (hours too early for me), I tore round the Louvre, the Jardin Plantin, and the Luxembourg with all the rapture of first love. Yes, that was it, I had fallen in love with pictures, and a heavenly feeling it was too.

Of course, it must be a privilege to grow up with all these aspects of beauty, music and art, part of your background and education. But it is also a privilege to have all these aspects of beauty burst upon you with the force of "religious experience" in later life. A succession of miraculous revelations, of breathless love affairs, of rapt worship. One gets so much out of beauty, anyway, no matter how or in what form it comes to one, whether one is younger or older, that one need not argue as to the best way, thankful for the miracle of its coming.

At first it was Old Masters. Oh! the Italian Exhibition at Burlington House! Then I ran slap into the extreme modernists in an exhibition on one of the upper floors of the Kron Prinz Museum in Berlin in 1930. They were moved—or purged—afterwards, but they were the finest of their kind I have ever seen. I went in, glanced round, felt in the midst of a bewildering joke. Those ludicrous atrocities works of art! Seriously exhibited! Then a small painting of racing yachts done in "planes" caught my eye. Well—yes! In the end I stayed two hours, oblivious of a business engagement, and when I left, when I dragged myself away, I felt as if I had received another revelation. I stood in a doorway for a last longing look, and exclaimed aloud (in English amid that German crowd), "Goodbye beauty! Farewell loveliness!" Among my recollections still remains a chrome-yellow Christ blessing a purple sinner. And the sinner *was* being blessed, he *was* receiving forgiveness of God on himself and his sins with an anguish of relief! And flower pictures that from meaningless blotches of ugly colour slowly transformed themselves under one's gaze into the flowers of some heavenly garden. And so on and so on.

Eventually, during the next ten years I motored all over the Continent looking for picture galleries to slake my thirst for art,

finding the revelations of Dresden, Munich, Florence, Rome, Amsterdam, Madrid, as a gold-miner might stumble on virgin gold. Afterwards I toured the British Isles with the same quest. I noticed with interest that outside London the best galleries were in the worst places. Newcastle, Liverpool, Manchester, of course, have fine galleries (and Birmingham has beautiful Pre-Raphaelites), but Bolton, Bury, Oldham, and all those terrible industrial black spots had galleries that always showed, if in only a few things, somebody's careful and loving appraisal. Incidentally, I arrived at the Oldham Gallery at 8 o'clock one night and asked the attendant how long before they closed. "We never close as long as there is somebody here who wants to look at the pictures," he replied. And yet in the beautiful towns of the South, Brighton possibly excepted, there is hardly a gallery worth a glance.

I have seen a good many of the world's picture galleries by now, including some of the American galleries, but, of course, technically I still know nothing about art. I only know what I like (lots—even Luke Fildes' "The Doctor"). Still, people are of much more use to the world who really know what they like and say so (you don't have to agree with them) than people who don't know what they like. All kinds of good things and bad things break out in the world, and some of the good things are passed over, forgotten, because not enough people have the courage to know what they like and say so. Affirmatives make a greater contribution to the world than negatives. The positive appreciation, however unanalytical, is the more valuable.

It's odd the way people use the word "criticism" as always implying disparagement, fault-finding. Whereas criticism means a correct valuation, a just appraisal, and may equally embody superlative praise or dispraise. If one expresses disapproval people say, "Oh! you are so critical." But they never say that if one expresses approval. Ruskin said that the greatest value of criticism is to teach one what to like. And he, the greatest critic of his time, perhaps of all time, has said it.

Have I a favourite picture? It sounds a naïve suggestion, but if I have it is the Sisley that Tooth's Gallery owned and exhibited occasionally, "Route de Lauvenciennes." Its blues, its skies, its water, its sunshine, forever haunt me, though I haven't seen it since Tooth's lent it to the French Exhibition at Burlington House years ago.

Tooth's wanted £2,500 for that Sisley. Too dear for my possessing in every sense of the word. Dr. Boyle has often commented that I have "almost no sense of possession," and she is right. That is why I love gazing at shop windows. Colour, light, beauty, and all mine for me to look at free of charge, no bother of buying something I don't want, looking after it—and getting blind to its beauty through sheer familiarity. Tooth's are looking after that beautiful Sisley with a care I couldn't give it, other people are seeing it—at least, I hope they are—and some day I will get around to asking Tooth's where it is and, I hope, take another long look at its enchantment.

At the time I contemplated that Sisley at £2,500 I dismissed it as too expensive a possession for me. But actually, had I bought it instead of the staid investments I did buy, I should have fared far better, apart from the accidents of fire and bombing. You can't contemplate any investment thoughtfully without realizing the strange variety of things that can adversely affect it. Money takes unto itself strange wasting diseases. But it is difficult to look at that Sisley and believe that any mortal thing could ever diminish its immortal beauty.

The brilliant "Candidus" of *The Investors' Chronicle* had a clever, witty article entitled "Investment Conversation Piece" in a January, 1942, issue which really ought to be reprinted in some permanent form. It consisted of a conversation in a coffee shop between a Stockbroker, a Prospective Investor, and an Old Man in the Corner, which ended as follows: "The one big problem in investment to-day," said the O.M.C., picking up his bill, "is the management problem—the bugbear of every absentee owner. How do you know how any Company will be managed next week? How do you know that this or any other town or country is being, or will be, well and wisely managed? I have discovered the only way out of this fundamental problem. Buy a Rembrandt or a Gauguin. The management there was first class and cannot now or ever be altered. And somehow"—he put on his hat—"I get more satisfaction from looking at them than from reading a Share Certificate."

## CHAPTER XXX

ANOTHER outside interest was the various medical committees I was on, all to do with mental health.

In 1918 I became the Hon. Financial Adviser to Dr. Helen Boyle's Hospital now known as The Lady Chichester Hospital for Functional Nervous Disorders, and starting from there with a bias of just wanting to help Dr. Boyle I became deeply interested in the Mental Hygiene movement for its own sake. It is so fundamental.

In 1922 Dr. Boyle, with Sir Maurice Craig, founded the National Council for Mental Hygiene, and much of the early preventive treatment for nervous disorders introduced by many General Hospitals all over the Country has been founded on that Council's work. "In fact, it would be safe to say that since the founding of the Council in 1922 no progressive measure in Mental Health has taken place without owing something to the Council and its members."

A few years later Dr. Boyle helped Mr. Clifford W. Beers of the U.S.A. to form the International Council for Mental Hygiene, and up to the outbreak of war our National Council was affiliated to the Mental Health Committees of fifty-two countries.

(The world progresses by reason of all the individual things that individual people start without help or hindrance from the State.)

I went on the Executive Committee of the National Council for Mental Hygiene in 1922—my principal qualification being that I was a layman—and all sorts of other medical committees followed after that. Therefore, for the last twenty-five years I have been rather more behind the scenes among medical folk than most laymen.

Doctors are interesting, and, seen in the mass at medical committees and conferences, just like the rest of us, with their nobilities and stupidities, generousities and jealousies, and, I would add, power-complexes and money-grabbing desires. But fortunately for them, their profession forces the best out of them. I have met eminent medical people who had they been in the City or amid the temptations of business life would probably have landed themselves in the Old Bailey. But the medical profession, with its perpetual uneasy pressure on their good qualities, its unceasing call on their spiritual qualities, however embryonic, has turned them

into sympathetic responsible healers of the halt, maimed, and blind, for the most part worthy of their patients' trust. Sympathy—there is the alchemist that turns grosser human qualities into something resembling fine gold. I have sometimes felt—and said—that after too many medical committees I am glad to get back to the purer air of the City, where no one pretends to excessive disinterestedness, and where I have heard undue grabbing told with frank simplicity, "Look here, you can be one of the forty thieves, but you can't be the whole forty thieves. We want to come in on this ourselves." But in the main, perhaps, a higher percentage of medicoes spiritually touch the stars than in any other profession.

One of the most human qualities of doctors is their tendency individually and *en masse* to theories and enthusiasms. In the last twenty-five years I have seen fad after fad sweep the medical world, catch-phrase after catch-word announced and denounced as the cause or cure of all physical, mental, and moral evils, each taken with the utmost gravity until a newer fad came along. Some of these causes or cures have been "Have all your teeth out," "homosexuality," "insufficient elimination," "psycho-analysis," "lack of emotional outlet"—with a few trifles like masturbation and parent-fixation thrown in, while strawberries and aluminium saucepans have jostled for place as allergics with countless others. (I liked one American war correspondent's remark as he watched an air-blitz, "I find I am allergic to enemy planes.") Doctors are just as much given to exaggeration as the rest of us, driving a residue of truth to extreme conclusions.

Perhaps the grand major fads that I have seen sweep the medical world in my time have been the "Have all your teeth out" craze, the "homosexuality" phase, and the "psycho-analysis" furore.

The teeth craze is fading out—people found it too inconvenient to be minus a quite passable set of teeth while still plus their ailments. And when one or two medical eminents at last announced that "Teeth are always a symptom and never a cause," other medicoes gravely began to agree—and many patients sighed with relief.

The homosexuality phase is still with us, although slightly losing its dewy freshness. It is a mercy that this only cropped up with the nineties and Oscar Wilde. Otherwise our great Victorian novelists and poets—Dickens, Thackeray, Scott, Tennyson, and the rest—would have found their style greatly cramped. All their Victorian



heroes, men old and young, indulged in happy hero-worship and life-and-death friendships, wept and rejoiced with each other emotionally and demonstratively, quite uninhibited by any of these ideas. Then came the Oscar Wilde revelations. And since then head-hunting has been zestfully pursued in boys' schools, universities, theatrical circles, and "the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force." At its height a man could be rumoured to keep a dozen mistresses with less shattering consequences to his reputation than the exchange of an affectionate word or friendly glance with a fellow male. As for the hitherto completely convenient and economic arrangement whereby men shared diggings together because they were fond of each other—phew! Such an arrangement was only sanctionable if they obviously detested each other.

Well, that was that for men. But at least these were exclusively masculine sins and women were outside this hue and cry. Fussy provincial Edwardian parents gladly consigned their daughters clamouring for art, musical, and other careers to the care of young women friends or aunts or cousins—anything provided that it was female and that no goings-on with men were allowed.

And then came "The Well of Loneliness," that rather dull novel, so disappointingly lacking in detail. And oh! the vicarages and country homes who felt their peace of mind forever poisoned as they contemplated Daphne, Pamela, Joan, and Margery all living together with unthinkable consequences. Unthinkable is just about the right word! Ordinary people who prate of homosexuality haven't the remotest idea what they are talking about, don't know that real homosexuality is an extremely rare thing. And, above all, don't know that it's completely suitable and natural for all human beings to form deep and tender attachments, permanent or passing, irrespective of sex or age—and rather unnatural if they don't. Friendship, profound and ardent, knows no barriers in the human heart. Love, devotion, hero-worship, passionate adorations—all these have gone on in greater or lesser degree since the beginning of Time and the Bible. David and Jonathan ("he loved him as his own soul"), Naomi and Ruth ("entreat me not to leave thee . . . whither thou goest I will go . . . where thou diest I will die")—these most tender and passionate expressions of friendship have their counterparts in all ages. And a very good thing that they do. All the world of human beings generally suffer from too little emotion, not too much.

The psycho-analysis furore has solid and lasting stuff to it, and will always be a valuable method of treatment—for both doctors and patients. At its fashionable height the favourite cure-all urged on everybody was a good psycho-analytic clean-up. And it took some time before the wiser psychiatrists realized that psycho-analysis is a violent purge, that violent purges should only be used for exceptional cases, and that a little psycho-analysis goes a long way—and a much more useful way than a lot. In fact, some experienced psychiatrists are beginning to say that people who have undergone a thorough psycho-analysis are apt to have had the stuffing taken out of them permanently. All I can note is the interesting fact that many of the specialists who propound psycho-analysis most fervently have “been done” themselves and can be seen just as much after as before suffering from the most blatant “psychoses, neuroses, and psycho-neuroses”. (After twenty-five years on medical committees I don’t know what this solemn jingle means, but sufficiently repeated it has a grand hypnotic effect on the listeners.) So it hasn’t made all that difference to them, and they’ve come out of it like the rest of us, large as life and just as natural.

The various theories on which psycho-analysis is based formulate valuable truths, but some of those truths merely put into new words facts that have always been known to wise doctors under older and more everyday expressions.

(If some of the foregoing sounds flippant, put it down to too many medical committees, and remember, as I have said before, I write as a layman.)

## CHAPTER XXXI

ONE of the people who mattered very much to me during the twelve years that I knew her was Lilian Baylis, of the Old Vic and Sadler’s Wells.

I have met few great people in my life, but Lil Baylis was great. She was deeply religious—any church, any creed, any altar—she had paralysing simplicity, an iron hand not necessarily concealed by a velvet glove, and her quest of the Holy Grail was beauty for everyone through music, opera, ballet, and Shakespeare.

Lil Baylis came over from South Africa when I was about twelve years old, bringing with her a banjo belonging to my grandmother’s

youngest son, Jack, who had recently died in Johannesburg. He had been in love with Lil and she with him—but she didn't realize it fully till his sudden death.

Lil made a great impression on me. I remember going to see her for a few banjo lessons in her aunt's little house in Kennington, and meeting her aunt, the famous Emma Cons. Lil Baylis was a young, attractive girl then, her attraction not in the least marred by that sideways twist of her mouth and smile. We all went down to the Old Vic one evening, my first visit to a Music Hall, but a very innocuous one; the show was mild conjuring turns and operatic arias. It was a Saturday night, and the performers all came into Miss Cons' stage box, where we were, to be paid. Two of them, I think the conjurers, were twins, and we children looked in fascination at their complete likeness to each other.

I didn't see Lil again for years afterwards, thirty years. As a matter of truth, my temperamental grandmother arrived from South Africa and announced that Lil Baylis was out of her favour and that I wasn't to be allowed to have any more banjo lessons or see her any more. I've never forgotten trying to argue with my mother when she made me send Lil a postcard—a postcard!—cancelling a meeting and all other meetings. I didn't often argue with my mother when I was twelve or at any age.

But I followed Lil's great career in the papers with avid interest, and thirty years later met her at a women's club. From then onwards till her death I admired and deeply cared about her. A few weeks before her death she wrote me, "I'd like to have your photo and I'll send you one of mine if you'd like it, and if you don't think this is being too sentimental." The photo she sent me is hanging in my office. Sometimes she used to murmur to me, "You know, dear, if I'd married your Uncle Jack you'd have been my niece!"

Lil Baylis told me that when she took over the Old Vic after Miss Cons' death she was only interested in opera. Some dramatic school persuaded her to let them put on a Shakespearean show at the Old Vic, against her will, because she considered Shakespeare was impossible for an Old Vic audience. And, in Lil's own words, "I didn't know anything about Shakespeare—but I did know what was bad, and that was *very* bad."

Lil said: "That night I woke up in bed and heard Shakespeare's voice saying to me, 'Why have you murdered my beautiful words? You must produce me properly!' I sat up in bed and *argued* with

him. I knew it was Shakespeare, and I told him, 'I don't know anything about your plays; I can't produce them.' And Shakespeare kept on saying to me, 'Why have you murdered my beautiful words? You must produce me properly!' And in the end he made me *promise* to produce him." Anybody who met Lil will recognize the complete simplicity with which she told this, and regarded and accepted her promise as a religious mission.

It was through Lil, of course, that I came to appreciate ballet—another sudden conversion to beauty. Ballet had never interested me until in Moscow in 1935 (where one was "taken" to ballet as a matter of course) I saw "Les Sylphides." Oh! the lovely thing! Just music and colour and beautiful movement—and no human voices to break the other-world spell. Then Lil Baylis took me to a Covent Garden Command Performance, and I realized "Les Sylphides" wasn't an isolated spot of beauty—it was part of a world of beauty, of ballet. I took to going every Saturday to Sadler's Wells amid a very busy life, and realized the heavenly relaxation of ballet. I remember those Saturday afternoons—the music, the colour, the movement. And then the interval, and I would watch for Lil Baylis's entrance from the side, or would go and see her in her box or in the Green Room.

Lil was pleased and proud of my sudden conversion to ballet. But try as she might, Lil couldn't make me appreciate Shakespeare or Grand Opera. More of my dead spots. When I came back from my frequent banking trips to Budapest, where one was taken to opera as a matter of course, she used to ask me "what I'd seen," meaning, in her language, what operas, etc. When I'd reply, "Oh, one of those things with a fat tenor prancing about," she used to look at me as if almost disowning me, and murmur, "Aren't you awful!"

When I did suddenly take to Shakespeare it was Shakespeare in modern dress, which was anathema to her. When some fellow-producer of Shakespeare—but in modern dress—got into business difficulties she remarked, "It almost serves him right, dear, with that dreadful Shakespeare of his!"

After her death I remember "Hamlet" being done in a stylized modern dress at the Old Vic, and I wondered how she would have felt about it. I admired it, and thought the grey and black burial scene with the slow, sombre procession of mourners under umbrellas dramatically effective. And Ophelia—poor little Ophelia—

suddenly stepped clear out of medieval posture, and became a terrified, pathetic girl—a terrified girl anywhere—caught up in a tragedy too awful for her understanding. I also admired the modern Macbeth greatly (a woman in the stalls next to me ejaculated, "Oh, I can't stand this Macbeth in modern dress—it makes it all so *real!*") One suddenly "saw" those three witches—products of the worst slum life of Edinburgh in their wretched shawls and greasy cloth caps—embodied venom, knowing well who Duncan was and out "to make his flesh creep" by every vicious twist of speech their spiteful tongues could devise. And Lady Macbeth in her short scarlet chiffon dance frock—so ambitious and so bored—with her weak and gentlemanly husband. Nerves going to pieces for lack of an emotional outlet, frantically grasping at anything, murder even, that would open a vista in the tedium of her life. But I didn't like the "Merry Wives of Windsor" at all. Under the test of modern dress the "Merry Wives" showed up as merely bad comedy—because you can't make a good comedy out of a husband's inordinate jealousy; it isn't a humorous subject.

I remember other things about Lil Baylis. Every Sunday for many years during the winter months she used to take parties of volunteers from the Old Vic and Sadler's Wells to the Leper Colony, in which she had a deep, religious interest, and I was privileged to lend my car for transport of the performers. When space permitted I went along; the turns were anything each individual could do, for the most part without scenery or wardrobe, and I never heard Hamlet's Soliloquy better given than by a young man in a lounge suit. The Colony was Lil's pet hobby; it was a remarkable place in charge of nuns and doctors who by their ceaseless experimenting with various forms of treatment were actually able to show some success with the early cases, if only by arresting the disease.

I remember taking Lil Baylis over to France for a week-end with my mother, whom she adored. I had my car over there, and we toured the French and Belgian coastal villages and showed Bruges to Lil. She shopped with zest in the French Sunday morning markets, and arrived home at her little house in the Stockwell Road with a French marketing basket packed with salads and sausages for her usual Sunday evening theatrical supper party.

I remember the Abdication night—or some night just before it—I came into the Green Room and Lil rushed up to me and

said, "Do you know what he did—the Conductor of the Orchestra? Just before the curtain came down he phoned me and asked could he play the King right through? Well, dear, I said, 'Fancy asking me a question like that!' And then before I could think what to do I heard him start the King and play it all the way through! But wasn't it an awful question to ask?"

I remember enthusiastically saying to Lil that she must see the "Show Boat" with Cedric Hardwicke as Captain Andy, and her replying mournfully to me—mournfully because deploring my taste: "No, dear; I did try, but I couldn't sit through it—though I love Paul Robeson and that sweet little wife of his!" A year or two later she reminded me of it with a casual, "You were right, dear, though I couldn't see it at the time—I think Cedric Hardwicke is the most remarkable actor on the stage to-day."

Lil Baylis and her two little—oh! such spoilt little dogs, always in attendance! When she was having her season at the Lyric, Hammersmith, while the Old Vic was rebuilding, she used to drive over to our house at Bedford Park every week for dinner—with her dogs, of course. My cat used to be locked up, and after dinner, to my mother's well-concealed horror (she didn't like dogs), Lil used to sit on the sofa and carefully comb those two little dogs from nose to tail. We loved having Lil to dinner at our house and thinking out a weekly menu for her; she was so fond of good food and understood it. She was an excellent cook herself. I can hear her now murmuring in a loud aside in the middle of a public speech about "The Theatre," "Many's the proposal I've had over the frying pan!" to her audience's intense amusement.

What a lovely person Lil was! her casualness, her calm rudeness, her crooked smile, and her darling friendliness and personal affection that one feels one never had before or will get again—not that kind, anyway.

I saw Lil the last Saturday before her death, slowly marching through Sadler's Wells during the interval, stopping in the side aisle by the stalls, leaning against the wall and slowly scrutinizing the audience. When a few days later I heard she was dead I felt as if a hole had been made in the world, as if an awful blank had been made in infinity—I don't know how to express it—and I've felt so ever since. I went to look at her in her coffin, thinking perhaps it would help the awful sense of loss, but it made it worse. Lil wasn't there—the shrewd, masterful, humorous Lil with the

streak of the gamin in her crooked smile—but only an old and very tired woman. I had not realized her age and how much her tremendous work had aged her until then.

## CHAPTER XXXII

IN 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, and 1930 I made rapid tours of Europe—rapid business trips to Hungary, Roumania, Jugoslavia, and Germany, and non-business trips on the side to Rome, Athens, Constantinople (I wanted to see “The Golden Horn”), grimly romantic Prague, a flying trip one Christmas in 1927 to Spain (not seen since 1906), across to Tangier, and so on. I loved going to places and seeing things. Just as in my poorer days I had made exciting dashes on a few pounds to Holland, Bruges, Venice, New York, and so on, now I made much more expensive and equally exciting dashes to Egypt, Italy, Spain, Morocco, Madeira—and, as a contrast, Switzerland for winter sports and Geneva for the League of Nations. All travel to me is exciting. Nostalgia overwhelms me when I think of Calais, the landing stage, the big advertisement “The Home of Perrier,” the Gare clock tower that told one whether one’s boat, the *Canterbury Belle* or what not, was late, and then—that long, exciting Wagon-Lit labelled “Orient Express,” with that thrilling string of names ending with Budapest, Bucharest, Sofia, Istanbul.

Constantinople was being rapidly modernized when I saw it, including the Turkish women—emancipated by law, bobbed hair and sunburn stockings everywhere, the yasmak forbidden. Only in the rather Brummagem bazaars did one occasionally see old figures in the forbidden yasmak crouching in dark corners. Our guide said, “The police leave them alone—they are very old.”

Our guide was an intelligent, well-educated woman who had been brought up in the Royal Harem since she was five. She told us that foreigners’ ideas of life in the harem—reclining on silken cushions, a hookah in one hand, a box of turkish delight in the other—were quite wrong. She said that in the Royal Palace there were some 5,000 people, that the women of the harem had to organize the entire household and commissariat, and that running the Palace for 5,000 people took a lot of work. She said that of all

the women in the Palace not more than about 300 would ever really see or be seen by the Sultan, and the rest worked for their living. Parents were always anxious to get their daughters into the Palace because they got a good training—she made it sound like a sort of Civil Service—and a certain social cachet that gave them much better prospects of marriage. She herself had married from the Palace, her husband being a doctor, and when war came in 1914 she went to the battlefield with him as a Red Crescent nurse. He was killed, and after the war she trained as a Government guide to support herself and her two children. She was a good guide.

Geneva in, I think, 1929 for the League of Nations Session was interesting. The Assembly, the low-toned, monotonous gabble of the interpreters, Ramsay MacDonald's old-age oratory (laboured and repetitive in the style of *The-House-that-Jack-Built*). To me the most outstanding feature of Geneva was Alfred Zimmern's brilliantly lucid morning summaries of the previous day's proceedings. If his summaries had been printed and widely circulated they might have done much to build up a picture of the League in other countries.

A picture of a World Research Laboratory trying to find remedies for age-old world ills—trying and failing, trying and failing, and destined to go on trying (whether at Geneva or some other Geneva) until the successful formulas are found bit by bit, fraction by fraction, through infinite persistence and patience and work and agony. Yes—Geneva was interesting in 1929. There was a sort of hope in the air, a sort of morning-of-the-world feeling, partly induced by the lots of young people about, enthusiastic over they hardly knew what. Someone in one of the Secretariats said to me that 50 per cent. of all the money spent on this, that, and the other project at Geneva was American money. It was all the beginning of something bound to come. Like religion, in some shape or form it has to be.

In January, 1930, I went to Egypt, Suez, Cairo, up the Nile, and home via the—to me—enchanted Venice of Ruskin. I had seen Venice just once before in 1913, when I took my mother and myself on a fortnight's Continental tour that included Bruges again, of course, Lucerne, Zurich, Verona, Venice, Milan, and a few other places, at a total cost of £14 for the two of us—my salary was still only £2 10s. a week in 1913. That was the last holiday I had until my *de luxe* American holiday in 1920. 1913 was also my first



visit, often repeated in later years, to the heavenly beauty of the Lake of Lucerne. Call it picture-postcard beauty if you will; but it is beauty. For sheer melodic loveliness I know nothing more exquisite than Brunen on Lake Lucerne and—at the other side of the world—Lake Louise in the Rockies. As lovely as song.

But Venice for me in 1913 was a different story; after the well-beloved dark waterways of Bruges, with its bright red roofs and bright green trees, Venice, with its pastel colourings, its classical outlines, was flat, monotonous, disappointing. And, anyway, it was very hot there in the August of 1913, the mosquitoes were a pest, and an incipient cholera outbreak threatened a plague. But in 1930 I revisited Venice on my way home from Egypt. These were the years I fell in love with pictures, and was nearly hypnotized by the gorgeous Italian Exhibition in London—who can forget that Exhibition? Had saturated myself on the leisurely thirteen days' voyage out from Tilbury to Port Said in Ruskin's seven volumes of "Modern Painters." Had steeped myself in the four days' stormy voyage back from Alexandria to Venice in Ruskin's "Stones of Venice."

I remember that voyage, one of the worst storms at sea I ever encountered in all my travels. I lay in my bunk reading "The Stones of Venice" in between bouts of sea-sickness, completely oblivious of the sea-sickness, conscious only of the exquisite beauty of Ruskin's prose and the beauty of his Venice. And when I landed, feeling as if I had had a bemused four days of beauty, storm or no storm, it was Ruskin's Venice that I saw. A cold February, cold skies, cold winds, but the enchantment of Ruskin and Venice, and the glow of the Italian Exhibition, and the new-found glory of pictures, art, was thrilling through me like an adolescent love affair. That's the way to see Venice—through the eyes of a lover.

Of course, I love the East, even though the East to me is a handful of dusty palm trees, camels, and the heartbreaking sob of donkeys braying at night on the Nile, all mixed up with some childish memory of an Earl's Court Exhibition in the nineties. I love the Arabian-Nights fascination of the market-place of Tangier, the Souks of Marrakesh. Dim-lit booths and dark faces—just faces—wild colours, sounds, nostalgic smells, wet-goat-skin water-carriers, dark girls crowding up the steps of a fountain, water jars on heads, and—a vivid memory—a sudden half-silence and a press-

ing back as an Arab Sheik galloped through the crowded souk on the only beautiful camel I have ever seen—deep cream, groomed and flawless.

And, another memory, the road through the desert, and the Arab wedding procession and the very adult sheep which were part of the bride's dowry, jogging along comfortably tucked into panniers with their heads out, staring back at the long wedding procession behind them with worldly cynical faces.

I loved the Nile and the massive Temples. I felt that I liked them much more than the Greek Temples, but probably only because they were bigger, more massive. I like big things. It would seem to me much easier to worship gods built to the size of the Sphinx, to worship in temples the size of the Pyramids. Perhaps that's why I like the great Mosques of Constantinople, all haze and light and beautiful carpets and silence.

Am I everlastingly thankful I've had all this and infinitely more? Am I indeed?

Some things I'll never forget. Cadiz. What silver and white perfection! And the strand at Assuan, alongside of which our Cook's steamer was moored. A thousand years ago that strip of strand might have looked the same! At one end a caravan of camels, slowly loading, slowly rising. Men praying on mats by the water's edge, men washing and (of course, immediately downstream) men dipping the water and slowly drinking. A fortune-teller, donkeys braying (by the way, the popular "Donkey Serenade" is very true to Nile donkey night life), the harsh creak of wooden wells, cooking, children, date-vendors, hammering of boat-building, goats being milked, tents, sand, water-carriers, story-tellers, native letter-writers, money-changers—endless squatting human figures, all in the ageless brilliant sunshine, blue sky, and palms. Ageless the whole scene seemed, or age-old, regardless of the tourists hanging over the side of the luxurious steamer above.

Typical tourist impressions all this. Yes, but few people see things so extraordinary that no other eye has seen them, or find combinations of words to describe them that no other mind has found.

In October of 1930 I made a business tour of certain German municipalities. The incident that stays most in my mind in connection with that trip, and only because of after circumstances, was leaving one prosperous thousand-year-old City late at night after

meeting the City Fathers, remembering that in the Mayor's house, where we were lunched, there had been children somewhere audible in the background, stopping on the outskirts of the City, buying a large and ornate box of chocolates and sending it back by the chauffeur with a message to those unknown but audible children, receiving on my return to London a message of thanks from the Mayor.

There was nothing unusual in this for me, by the bye. When I was in Budapest I generally wound up my business engagements by giving a children's tea party at Gerbaults. The children chose what they liked from Gerbaults' gorgeous menus, and I remember on one occasion every child, offered a range of exotic drinks, solemnly chose *tea*! Why? Oh, because tea came in small pots and they wanted the thrill of pouring out their own tea from their own pot.

But that box of chocolates had its sequel in a German law court several years after. The German agent responsible for collecting and remitting interest-moneys for the City got into difficulties during the acute German depression and absconded with some of the moneys. The municipality declared he was our agent, we declared he was their agent. Eventually it was brought before the German Courts in 1935, and at the last moment my able partner had practically to prepare the case himself, since Hitler's sudden anti-Jewish laws had completely disbarred our thoroughly prepared German-Jewish lawyer. Mr. Sefton Turner appeared in court with his interpreter (none other than the famous Dr. Schmidt, afterwards interpreter for Hitler and Chamberlain) and a British Consular official. The Mayor clanked into the witness box, complete in brown shirt, swastikas, and Nazi salute, and opened his evidence with venomous remarks regarding our late German-Jewish lawyer. The German judge cut him short with the icy rebuke, "Such remarks are most unsuitable in the presence of a representative of the Consulate of His Britannic Majesty." The Mayor then declared that he had never seen me, knew nothing of our Corporation or its Managing Directors, and knew the absconding party only as our agent. The judge read aloud the letter from the Mayor acknowledging with many compliments the box of chocolates for his children, and said: "You ask this Court to believe that you thanked a lady you had never met or heard of for a box of chocolates sent by her to a Mayor she had never met, for

children she couldn't know the existence of?" That and other evidence finished the Mayor. Eventually the case was decided by the Court in favour of the British bondholders, with instructions to the Municipality to make good the interest-moneys embezzled by the agent whom the Court declared proven to be their agent. Whatever the German Courts became afterwards, Mr. Turner declared that no Court or Judge could have been more rigidly impartial, and he was impressed also by the business-like way the Municipality accepted the verdict.

After the trial and verdict my conciliatory partner, with his gift for friendliness, took the Mayor back with him to his hotel, gave him tea, told him we would ask our clients not to press for immediate payment of the lost interest-moneys until the final redemption date, and ended up by going home for a pleasant weekend with Brown Shirt and his wife and children. Some years after some fluctuation in the exchange made it advantageous for the Municipality to buy in its bonds, which it did, and that ended our interest in the matter.

It was when I was in Germany in 1930, I remember, that the Jewish partner of a very big banking firm said to me—we had been talking about the possibility (common talk then) of the financial centre shifting from London to New York, "England will always be the world's financial centre because England is so *reliable*." He said it with grave emphasis, and then went on to talk for several minutes of the extraordinary reliability of the English. "Other countries," he said, "might have other qualities, might be better in other ways, but"—according to him no other country had England's reliability—"England is so *reliable*."

### CHAPTER XXXIII

IN December, 1930, I was suddenly stricken down with phlebitis, resulting from an accidental blow on the leg. For days and nights I hung between life and death. I remember on Christmas Eve they were pumping oxygen into me to keep me alive. I had some six doctors in attendance, and day and night nurses, and was in bed for four months, unable to move.

Some people dislike nurses, but my experience of them has been

delightful, whether in my own house or in nursing homes. My nurses have been lovely, and whenever I have been ill some nurse was always there to tell me in an Irish or Scotch accent what a perfect patient I was.

I realized early on in my illness that it was going to be a long and very boring business, unless I found some occupation. So I decided to try and learn French. In spite of all my travelling, I had the usual British utter incapacity for picking up even a smattering of a language. My partner wasn't much better, with the result that all our Continental business negotiations had been conducted in English. This has advantages. We insisted that the originals of all our contracts should be the English contract; it was the English contract that was signed by all parties, and translations prepared by the opposite parties with any attendant misinterpretations were their responsibility and not ours. The English contract only was recognized.

As soon as I was over the acute stage of my illness I got a French-woman teacher to come in every day for three months, drill me in French, and leave me sufficient preparation for next day's lesson to keep me fully occupied. I therefore successfully dodged the mental boredom of a long illness, and at the end of my convalescence I had quite a useful smattering of French.

By way of convalescence I went on my first Continental motor-tour all over France, Switzerland, and Germany for ten weeks. Yes, that was my idea of convalescing. I loved motoring and loved travel, and I hadn't motored over the Continent before—the Golden Arrow and Orient Express had been good enough for me. One would have thought that ten weeks abroad would have completed my French tuition. But it was no good; my chauffeuse had a smattering of French; she did what French conversation was necessary, and at the end of ten weeks I had comfortably forgotten all the French I had so painstakingly acquired. But it had done what I wanted—prevented boredom.

I left England unable to walk more than a few yards after all those months in bed. It was incredibly fatiguing trying to regain my walking powers, with no other object than self-consciously to walk, with every step an effort. And then I limped into the Munich Picture Gallery. And for the next few days spent hours and hours walking round and round, too enthralled by beauty to care a jot whether my legs ached or not. Having exhausted Munich, we

motored off to Dresden. More days of beauty. Then we dashed homewards via Holland, Amsterdam, The Hague, all the beautiful Dutch galleries. The result was I returned to England apparently walking as well as I had ever walked, with the memory of those utterly enthralling galleries.

But phlebitis has haunted me ever since with slowly increasing persistence. I can saunter a hundred yards, but I can't walk half a mile. It is a nuisance, and the only practical solution is not to attempt to walk half a mile. For the first few years after my illness in 1931 I hopefully tried to get back to normal walking powers, but the only result was two or three weeks in bed every few months with a nurse in attendance. I found that diathermy, radiant heat, and some osteopathy prevented these collapses if treatment were taken immediately. And I have now philosophically resigned myself to comparative physical inactivity, thankful that I can comfortably saunter about the office and my home.

Actually those years since 1931 have been among the most active in my life. I have motored all over Europe, and parts of Africa at different times, from the Sahara Desert to the Arctic Circle. I have seen most of the picture galleries of Britain, France, Italy, Spain, Germany, Holland, and Belgium, the temples of Sicily, the fjords of Norway, the Scotch and Irish lakes and mountains. I have visited the U.S.A. and Canada five or six times, including the last extensive lecturing tour in the summer of 1941 that nearly knocked me out. Those transatlantic hotels, those huge hotels, with their miles of corridors, those hours of standing "in the reception line" to shake hundreds of hands—smiling and talking and standing and shaking hands and walking over hotels night after night for five weeks! I got through it, and it was a most successful lecture tour. The International Federation who were sponsoring me reported to the M.O.I. in London that "Miss Gordon Holmes was one of the most effective representatives sent to this country. Few tell so compelling a story or meet with so warm a response, increased also through a very wide and favourable press." But I was in bandages for months afterwards.

To fellow-sufferers from phlebitis I can only say, Don't walk a step that you can avoid. But that doesn't necessarily mean that active life is ended for you.

I returned to the office in July, 1931, after seven months' illness and absence, to find all business in the throes of the awful world

slump. Somehow in the next few years the world seemed to be getting through it—with eyes and thoughts preoccupied in watching Roosevelt, watching Hitler, watching Stalin, watching all these men and experiments. Hoping with troubled minds that somewhere someone among them might show us all a new way of dealing with the world's terrible problem: men without work. The problem was so dire, the lack of any solution in other countries so obvious—could we learn anything from these new men, these new methods, this New Order? It remained for Roosevelt many years afterwards to puncture this—to many people—shining bubble in one forthright sentence: "It isn't New. And it isn't Order. It's the oldest form of disorder—misrule by tyranny."

Those were strange bewildering days in Europe. I remember a lecturer remarking on one curious phenomenon: "In Europe we are ruled by men who have been in prison—De Valera in Ireland, Bonnet in Paris, Dr. Negrin in Spain, Mussolini in Italy, Hitler in Germany, the popular leader in Poland, Stalin in Russia—all men who have been in prison. These men who have been in prison have suffered for their convictions and are not likely to show tolerance now that their turn has come to rule."

In America, Roosevelt experimented, improvised, legislated, instituted New Deals, closed all the banks, opened some of them again, made two paper dollars grow where one gold dollar grew before. Proclaimed relief, recovery, and reform—but accomplished only relief. Put millions of acres out of cultivation, slaughtered hogs, ploughed in cotton—yet human welfare depends on abundance, not on scarcity.

And in the end all these vast experiments seemed to amount to no more than that Britain put men without work on the dole, Roosevelt put them on relief work, Hitler put them in uniform. No more than that. As for Russia . . .

#### CHAPTER XXXIV

As for Russia . . .

Like other people, I took it for granted that the Russian Revolution was one of those spasms that would peter out in a year or two and a restoration take place, not of what we called law and order,

because Russia never seemed to have had such things—but a restoration of something.

The first time I woke to startled attention to what was really happening in Russia was in 1922. I was reading an American book giving a world review of education, and I noticed the thoughtful, respectful interest given to Russian educational plans and systems. Russian education! I didn't know they had any. In fact, I knew they had been one of the most illiterate countries in Europe.

But after that I began to take a growing interest in the Russian experiment. A City friend advised me to read the weekly *Moscow News*, published in Russia, printed in English. I did, and consequently when I visited Russia in 1935 I was to a small extent prepared for the progress of the Soviet Union because I had read that paper each week for many years. I had seen it grow from a four-page bulletin printed on bad paper with a few almost indecipherable illustrations to quite a substantial weekly review, well printed on good paper with excellent illustrations. My City friends smiled at the regularity with which I read it from cover to cover, maintaining that it was such propaganda as to be valueless.

But even in propaganda you can read between the lines. In the illustrations, however "staged" the joyous crowds might be, it was possible to note the gradually improving clothing; in the street scenes the gradually improving buildings and the slow appearance at last of automobiles; in the announcements and reviews the increasing number of theatrical and musical events and books. Of stern utility gradually broadening to include recreation, art, beauty.

Of course it was propaganda, Soviet Russia first, last, and all the time, with an occasional savage swipe or bitter jibe at all other countries. But I arrived prepared to see very much what I did see, a country and civilization in the making, frowningly intent on itself, without interest in anything that wasn't Russian. My companion, a very intelligent and observant young woman doctor, arrived in Russia prepared to see starvation, misery, and ignorance on all sides. Her first exclamation was, "I never expected it to be so civilized!" and by the time we left she had rather tipped over to the other extreme—thought things were a bit rosier than they really were. Because life in Russia was still hard, very hard. People didn't smile in Russia—you saw no smiling faces in 1935.

I sent a letter each night to my London office, saying what I saw each day (all delivered promptly, nothing censored). What I saw



was a series of snapshots. I give a few, a very few, of them here—but of course even snapshots have a personal bias in the angle and objects at which you tilt your camera. We were not quite the ordinary tourists, because my doctor friend and I were concentrating on the mental health services in Leningrad and Moscow, their psychological and psychiatric clinics, etc. I also wanted to see some textile factories; I was at that time a director of a big textile factory in Hungary and wanted to make comparisons. Here are the snapshots.

*Leningrad, May, 1935.*—Our guide is a very good-looking woman of forty-two, cultured, charming, and well read. She was three years at Oxford before the war. She trained as a lawyer, has not been out of Russia since 1914, is married to a doctor, has two children. She gave up law and took to guiding—a serious, well-paid profession here—because “I have more time to look after my husband and children.”

She laughed merrily when we hinted we understood the Russian Government wanted to break up family life, and said it was nonsense. “I wouldn’t give up my children for anyone.” Her boys, ten and twelve, go to a Government school; there are no others. She says the education is excellent and the surroundings good, “though, of course, I do not let my boys make friends with everybody.” This was said with an intonation that might have been any “bourgeois” mother all over the world speaking.

Her elder boy (twelve) is baptized in the Orthodox Faith, her younger not. When her mother died two years ago she decided that, although she personally is not religious, her mother would have liked a religious ceremony, and so the old lady was buried with the full honours of the Orthodox Church.

Madame was married in church in 1922 “because my mother wanted a church ceremony.” When we asked, “Didn’t the Government prevent all this religion?” she laughed again at such ignorance, and said, “Why should they?” Her father owned house property which was confiscated at the time of the housing shortage, but later on one house was given back to him, and the previous year he sold it to some private person and put the money in the People’s Savings Bank, which gives him 8 per cent. on it—it used to be 10 per cent. Her father now has a pension from the Government, and lives fairly comfortably. “It is a little difficult, but he has enough.” All the old people have pensions according to their

grade of work; he was a lawyer. Did he mind about his houses being taken? "Yes, at first, but afterwards he saw the Soviet programme was so sensible for everybody that he became reconciled to it."

We drove all round Leningrad to-day—a fine city, magnificent streets of enormous width. The streets look a joke, people swarming all over them, and no traffic except tramcars, a few lorries, and occasional "intourist" cars from the hotels. Saw the Hermitage collection of pictures, beautiful Cranachs, and a lovely Dutch School, very fine but badly hung, so many that they are crowded to the ceiling.

The streets are very clean and free from rubbish, but some of them in a bad state of repair. Endless building going on everywhere, some of it very cheap material. Saw a rest-home for men manual workers where they go for two or three weeks' rest or holiday free. They were all being photographed outside, with the usual bashful giggles, and anxious moments for the photographer as he tried to fit them all in.

Women selling ice-cream at every corner—"Government Refreshment Trust" ice-cream. There are practically no private enterprises of any description; a few people selling wild violets in the streets, picked by themselves, a few private tailors working with only their own family aid, are the only private enterprises.

The break-up of family life has been greatly exaggerated; the popular unit is still father, mother, and baby, sometimes two children, not often more, although we are told families of four or five are quite normal. Everywhere one sees these little family groups out together.

By the bye, married women need not work here, but it is hard at present for a man to earn enough to keep two, and there is so much work to do that everybody can have work for the asking, so most married women do work, and every factory has excellent crèches and kindergartens where the women put their children during working hours. Most factories are running in eight-hour shifts, generally two shifts a day, but many in three shifts a day. Hence tramcars are running all night, except for two hours, to serve workers coming on or off shifts.

Saw the celebrated Anti-God Museum to-day, a magnificent old Royal Church, Cathedral of St. Isaak. Everything, including altars, pictures, and beautiful marbles, kept in excellent repair, but

decorated with educative posters showing up superstition—not as bitter as I expected, merely cynical, showing the immense sums of money that went as salaries to archbishops and Church dignitaries, while the people were starving. Also showing ikons with the Czar's picture inserted, which were worshipped as God. One lot was aimed at England—"Religion in military dress," with pictures of the Salvation Army.

At our casual request, we dropped into a big communal restaurant in three parts. One for the children, where they trooped in from school, clutching their kopecks, and were given what looked like good meals—under the supervision of nurses to see that they did not entirely dine off cakes and sweets, of which there were a variety for them to buy. A second part for adults, clean and tidy, but cheap and rough. A third part was better-class, with tablecloths and flowers, food more expensive. Our guide said our chauffeur would eat in the better class (by choice and because he could afford it). Street cleaners and the lowest grades of workers would eat in the poorer restaurant.

In the afternoon we dismissed car and guide, and set out for a stroll by ourselves. We were not conscious at any time of any attempt to hamper our movements; we strolled out by ourselves whenever we wanted to—at midday in Leningrad or at midnight round the Kremlin in Moscow. Neither had we any difficulty in seeing the type of institution we wished to see, whether it was special hospitals or factories. Our impression was that our guides answered our barrage of questions truthfully and on the whole frankly, and that we were quite as free as in any other country where one is completely ignorant of the language.

We were shortly picked up by a young mechanic who heard us talking English, and with whom we talked solidly for an hour and a half while we walked about the city. He is a fanatic for the Soviet system. He had been in America since he was five, and came back when he was fifteen in 1922, with his parents. He had worked as a low-grade mechanic in America, as a higher grade in Russia, and now the Soviet authorities had arranged for him to learn Chinese, and were paying him 50 roubles a week while learning, he having, of course, given up his mechanics. They want people speaking combined Chinese and English for work in Eastern Russia, and he goes there next year with his wife, who is a typist in one of the committee bureaus.

He lives in an apartment, 25 square metres, about the size of our quite large hotel bedroom, running cold water in building, which is an old one converted, but no bath. Food is cheap, he said, and we agreed from what we had seen. There are no more queues, but food distribution is still bad in some parts of Russia—"We have enough, but it is sometimes difficult to get."

We discussed divorce with him. He said divorce was easy; either party walked into a registry office and signed a paper demanding divorce—and then walked out, divorced, without the other party necessarily knowing anything about it. "Would you divorce your wife?" "No," said the youth simply; "I love her too much."

Incidentally, we asked him what he would do if he won a State Lottery prize, 5,000 roubles. He said—with a yearning emphasis—that he would buy a *bicycle* for himself, a *good* new coat for his wife, a coat and suit for himself, and then all the money would be gone. Had he a wireless? Yes, he had a loud-speaker. When we told him there were 15,000,000 bicycles in England, he obviously didn't believe us, and later when we repeated it to our young Moscow guide she obviously didn't believe there were that number of bicycles in the world. If there were, Russia would have them.

Went to House of Culture, otherwise workers' club, to-night. Has 7,000 people attending every night—painting, literary, musical activities in full swing. Children's separate portion where parents park the kids before going off to the adult side of the club. An enormous building with every kind of activity going on, all free except the theatre, which holds 3,000. Packed to-night to see the famous Moscow Players.

I watched a couple of acts of a new kind of Soviet drama, but could only gather that a wicked capitalist, symbolized by wearing a *hat* (everybody wears cheap cloth caps), got ten years' forced labour—which will learn him not to wear hats in future.

They showed me the foreign reading-room. I asked to see the English newspapers, but they had nothing but the *Daily Worker*. Our guide said in a club like that, open to everybody, they would not be allowed to see any papers of other countries—nothing that could possibly criticize the Soviet régime.

This afternoon went to the Palace of Catherine the Great. I have tramped through many palaces and châteaux in my time and am hardened to them, but I have *never* seen anything like the magnificence of that palace. The Gold Throne Room, last used for Poin-

caré's reception in 1914, is breath-taking. Stupendous, all of it, and beautifully looked after.

The modern palace of the late Czar is next door, their rooms just as they left them when he signed his Abdication and was taken to Siberia in 1917. The small boy's toy motor car still in his play-room, the Czarina's boudoir with its incredible clutter of family photos—all the ruling houses of Europe and their children at all ages, her own children at every age in every attitude, and also the Czar and herself, with and without the children, literally hundreds of photos and snapshots, all lovingly inscribed.

*Moscow, May, 1935.*—Our guide is a modern young thing of about twenty-two, attractive personality, never been out of Russia; has had three years at university for intensive "Guide" training, which includes art, history, economics, literature, music. After three years at guiding she is going back to the university—which is too full to take her at present—to take up "Biology or Aviation," she thinks, but she says, "There are so many interesting things to choose from nowadays." The Government will pay her 150 to 300 roubles a month whilst she is studying. She is a member of a Shock Brigade, and was recently presented with a rifle for good work.

Our guide's father is an engineer, her mother a teacher of singing, brother engineer. Father, mother, brother, and herself live together with grandmother, and are looked after by an old maid who was their nurse and runs the whole family. The nurse has her room full of ikons and is very religious. Grandma thinks our guide very wrong that she doesn't believe in God, but says she prays for her, so that she will be saved anyway. The six of them have three rooms with running cold water in building, but no bath.

Our first night in Moscow we went to the music hall, and our guide must have got home on the Underground about midnight. Nevertheless, having learnt that she would have to act as interpreter for my doctor friend at the hospitals, she turned up the next morning at 9.30 with sixteen pages of Russian medical terms which she had copied out and translated into English, and splendidly did she do the interpreting all day and every day for the next week.

Moscow is a noisy city, trams—ringing bells violently like fire engines—go on until 2.30 each night, and start again at 4.30. The road-menders in front of the hotel are working in three shifts right

through the twenty-four hours. Went for a walk by ourselves just before midnight. City well lighted, but otherwise quiet.

We went to a hospital for nervous diseases, like The Lady Chichester, but much larger, 400 beds (although they refer to it as a small hospital), in charge of a brilliant woman, who looks sixty-five, but says she is forty-nine. Wonderful X-ray work. Madame talked excellent English, and so did several of the staff.

More hospitals and clinics—asked some questions about suicide figures in Russia. Everyone states suicide is decreasing and not a serious problem (with us it is increasing and a very serious problem), and our young guide remarks, "Surely no one would want to kill themselves now when everything is so interesting. They would want to wait to see what the future will be like." We are told that suicides, murders, crimes, are not reported in the newspapers; pickpockets are generally small boys; gangsters are almost unknown; no one carries or is allowed to carry firearms. The sort of crime that goes on is casual, not the organized type of crime.

Doctor's opinion of the research clinics she has seen is that the work done is of a very high order and most thorough, with various original lines of research. The general hospital we saw she considered was below English standards in tidiness and cleanliness, the standard of nursing not so high, but much less red tape, starchiness, and ceremony. One mental hospital was of good standard. On the whole she considers the medical service as she has seen it very good, and the apparatus remarkably fine. Money seems to be given *ad lib.* for scientific research.

Asked how they selected their medical students. They instanced one girl who was employed at fifteen washing the floors; then, as she was intelligent, she was promoted to ward maid, and has gone on and on until at thirty she is a fully fledged doctor and an assistant professor. They pointed out another girl who started in the kitchen and was now taking her medical exams. Fine building, very bad roads out to it.

Went to see the Museum of the Mother and Child. Staggered at the mass of equipment for every form of child-welfare work, mental and physical. Mothers and children come there in batches to learn how to be a mother and how to be a child. Doctor says she has never seen anything like the equipment.

Saw Boyer House, a beautiful old seventeenth-century house,

now a museum, kept in perfect order. Saw the Cathedral of St. Basil, again a fine museum, marvellous old place with ten cupolas or domes filled with ikons inside. Ikons are just old religious pictures, the good ones—that is, the old ones—like Italian and other primitives. It would be fascinating to make an art tour of Russia simply to study their primitives or ikons. Saw Lenin's Tomb. Half the Red Square filled with hundreds of people lining up to get in, but we were passed in at once, because we were tourists. Very impressive; the people quiet, but not religious. I carefully inspected Lenin's face through binoculars. Perfectly preserved, but I shouldn't have known it wasn't a wax figure. Lighting and building inside all simple and impressive, but nothing theatrical like Napoleon's Tomb.

Went on the new Metro, or Underground Railway. Opened only last week, and the first day 350,000 travelled on it. When we went at 10.30 a.m. it was packed. One train every five minutes; beautiful marble stations in different Russian marbles; no posters because they won't disfigure the marble. In fact, there are very few posters to be seen. Parties of children were being taken by teachers on the Underground as a treat, and whooping up and down the moving staircases with great joy. The children's schools are all breaking up for the summer, and they have all their examinations on one day, and the next day are taken off to the Zoo, or Park of Culture, for a treat; hence the parties on the Underground. The trams are crowded, but none of that business of hanging on the outside like flies that one reads of—like so many other things in Russia, it was, but isn't now; more trams have been put on.

Saw the Museum of Russian Art, some marvellous Russian pictures from early primitives right up to modern times. A great deal of propaganda in their completely modern pictures. Crowds of people in it, such crowds as only the Italian Exhibition could draw in London—but one has to accept the fact that everywhere you go is crowded. The Leningrad-Moscow train we came on was one of four trains, running one after another every night—all packed.

Doctor comments on the fact that nowhere in Leningrad or Moscow has her medical nose encountered any smells of people, rubbish, drainage, or any sort of dirt or neglect. The music hall last night, holding 1,000, she said, had a remarkably good atmosphere, far better than a London gallery.

Went to opera this evening—they said a brand-new Soviet opera, but it proved to be the age-old tale of a lovely maiden and her wicked betrayer.

Went to see romantic burlesque called "Pickwick" last night, the best and most spirited representation of Dickens on the stage I have ever seen, brilliant and delightful; the audience loved it—it is immensely popular here.

Saw Marriage and Divorce Court—very simple, like a registry office, only some flowers and palms about, the Registrar a girl of about twenty-two, the young couple who were being married the usual cloth-capped youth and quite nice-looking girl. Our guide tapped them on the shoulder pleasantly, even while the "ceremony" was progressing, and asked them various questions for us.

Then we went into the Divorce Bureau, which is also the bureau for children's birth certificates, and which was crowded with parents and children all wanting birth certificates for their youngsters starting their new school year.

We wanted to see a divorce case, so our young guide, realizing we couldn't wait there for ever in that crowd, went up to each woman—certainly with a slight blush—and said, "Are you going to be divorced?" all the way round until she discovered that only one woman was there for divorce with her mother. The divorce is as simple as the marriage; one party only generally attends, but sometimes they both come. The Registrar, girl of twenty-two (the country seems to be run by girls in their late teens or early twenties; you see them as policemen, tram-drivers as well as tram-conductors, road-menders, justices), asks name and address of both parties, is divorce by mutual agreement, or one party only wanting it. They never ask the reason, and after further questions about the children the divorce certificate is handed out. If a man or woman has been divorced several times, enquiries are made, his factory is asked to look after him, or he may be sent to a medical clinic for observation, or to a "People's Friendly Court" to see what is wrong with him that he cannot settle down.

By the bye, the marriage fee is three roubles if either of the couple is in work, fifteen if they are both out of work, because it means they don't want to work. No one is obliged to work, but the Soviet Government makes non-workers *pay* for not working.

After inspecting some more hospitals, went to a police court, equivalent to our magistrates' court. Woman judge, about thirty,



which means probably eight years' legal training and experience behind her. Usual shabby beret and shabby coat and skirt. Beside her girl of nineteen, aviation student in khaki uniform, and on other side a man of about twenty-five from some factory committee. These two are "justices" and sit with the judge, who is permanent, for seven days, and then another two from some factory are called up—slightly like our jury system, but two instead of twelve, and they only attend for seven days. A girl of twenty-two, magistrate's clerk, taking all the evidence, etc.

Went to see textile factory to-day, producing 8,000,000 metres—60 per cent. real silk, 40 per cent. artificial silk. Makes net profit 3,700,000 roubles (paper) per annum, employs 3,000 people, 85 per cent. women, all managerial positions except four being filled by women, men at the heavy machinery end. Machines come from Russia, America, and France. This factory is superior to the Woolwash factory in Budapest in its ventilation and cleanliness, and a much higher type of girl worker is employed—that is to say, they look far more intelligent, not at all of the peasant type, and are very neatly dressed and shod. The real silk products are as good as Woolwash, but the artificial silk products are by no means as good as Woolwash products. The factory is working in two shifts, but is just arranging to work in three shifts, and will then produce 12,000,000 metres per annum. Last year, out of its profit of 3,700,000 roubles, about 1,000,000 roubles were given to the crèche and workers' welfare centres attached to the factory—all factories have these centres attached—about another 1,000,000 roubles were given to social insurance, and the remainder of the profit was handed over to the Government. We were told that the Government would in many instances hand part of the profit back to increase factory production, if required.

In the evening we went to see another ballet, a programme in two parts, one a ballet called "Adam" and another a ballet called "Chopiniana." Both perfectly beautiful—a dreamland of beauty and music and dancing and colour, marvellous *corps de ballet*, perfection of finish. The theatre was packed as usual.

Looked in at a shoe shop this morning to get a button put on; queues of people waiting their turn to have their shoes mended—not enough shoe-mending places. One comes continually up against the fact that there is not enough of anything here. The people are all quite well shod, the women in light shoes and silk stockings

universally. We have not seen a child without shoes and stockings. On the other hand, children occasionally beg for pennies for the cinema, etc., quite openly, and occasionally an old woman begs. We noticed one thing: we haven't seen a single stout elderly person; the young ones are some of them fat enough, but all those fat old parties between fifty and seventy one sees in other countries are not seen here; we are offering each other a prize to spot one. There are plenty of thin and medium elderly people.

Said we wanted to go into a church where a service was in progress. The guide and the chauffeur with great good nature tried several churches, until with the help of passers-by we found one open, and stepped straightway into Old Russia. The first real beggars we had seen clustered round the door. Church fairly full, old, young, and middle-aged. Doctor rather shocked at amount of kissing images and genuflecting and general atmosphere of superstition. There was certainly no suggestion of doing something unpopular, and I think the statement is correct that any churches can hold services if they can find the money.

Drove out to see the Bolsheve Juvenile Delinquent Colony, about twenty-five miles from Moscow. Three thousand boys and girls (young people under twenty-four at time of conviction) sentenced for all offences except political or straight murder. Most are in for thieving. The colony has been going for eleven years since 1924; the inmates, who were under twenty-four when they came in, are now considerably older; a large number of marriages have taken place, and 1,000 children born in the colony. Many of the delinquents have their parents living with them in the colony, so the total population is now 8,000, turning out 34,000,000 roubles of goods per annum, mostly tennis rackets and skis, for which they have a large and most up-to-date factory. I haven't called them prisoners because they are not prisoners. There isn't a guard in the place ("What should we guard against? Thieves? We are all thieves here"), or any firearms; no staff except four directors—all the other staffing is done by the colony themselves. The inmates live in large houses—the younger ones in dormitories, those who have worked their way up in rooms to themselves or with their wives and children or parents, and the "higher" officials in very nice flats. Anyone can run away if he wants to—but he can't run back. After his sentence is over he can stay or leave the colony, but only twenty-one people have left the colony since it was founded, although,

of course, many of the sentences have long ago expired. We are told that in any case *no* Soviet sentence can be for more than ten years, with one-third remission for good conduct. Inmates can be dismissed from the colony for three reasons—alcoholism, gambling, running away.

This colony is famous as a remarkable attempt to solve the problems of prisons, and the director—a man of about thirty, exceptional intelligence and personality—said the hope was, as more colonies were formed, that prisons would gradually cease. All convicted people would be drafted into colonies, where they would lead happy and useful normal lives, and would reform into good citizens. They get their voting power back at the end of sentence or earlier. All decisions, including permission to marry and everything else, are made by a People's Friendly Court, made up, of course, entirely by the inmates themselves. Those who wouldn't reform would be sent to hospitals or special clinics to find out what was the matter with them.

To-day we lunched with the French Ambassador and his wife. He is a great enthusiast for the Soviet régime, and says he spends his time trying to correct "the ridiculous things the foreign newspapers say about this country." He says in the two years he has been here things have improved beyond recognition. "Every month they improve," he says, and added there was plenty of food now, no rationing, and the people were much better off. We are told that Russians do not mix socially with the Diplomatic Corps at all.

He said he lunched with Stalin last week, sees him fairly often, likes and respects him as an honest man of great ability; describes him as "a tiger in repose."

The French Ambassador says Russia has no unemployment, although shock troops of workers are moved to various parts of the country as jobs get finished in one part and started in another; says they are trying to keep people from crowding into Moscow. They have a system of internal passports, and people can't move around without permission, but he said internal passports will be abolished in the next six months (and, anyway, the Russian people seem to move around all the time in masses). He said the Soviets knew that much later on there would be less work to do, as gigantic tasks were completed, and were already promising the people a "two-hour day" and telling them to prepare themselves

with sports, culture, reading, languages, art, etc., to enjoy their future leisure. We saw two large queues to-day, all waiting for newspapers. Everybody wants newspapers now that everybody can read, and there aren't enough newspapers printed on account of paper shortage—paper comes under Light Industry Five-Year Plan, which has only been going a year.

That ends the snapshots. Here are two small incidents that occurred that I did not put in my nightly letters. In one hospital a man occupying a high position in the Russian medical world casually dropped back behind the others and, speaking in a low voice, asked me to give a message to a friend of his in England to say that he was all right. He indicated a mnemonic that made the name easy to remember. I gave the message when I got back, and learnt they had heard nothing of him for years and were very relieved to get the message. Another time we were being shown round a garden and a girl casually lingered behind, told us her father wanted to get out of Russia, and ejaculated, "They say we are free to leave, but they will *never* let him go!"

We saw too much and too little to be able to form any definite opinion about the Soviet system except that it appeared to be doing wonderful work for Russia. We also felt very continuously the relief of being in a country where there was no unemployment and where everything around us was working two or three shifts a day.

The drawback, of course, was the lack of the four freedoms—or three of them. There may have been freedom from want (actual bare want on a pathetically meagre standard in 1935), but there was no freedom to think, speak, read, or listen under the Soviet system. True, the Soviets seemed quite unconscious of the lack of those freedoms. They believed what they were told. They had no standards of comparison and didn't want any. Truth had no abstract value to them.

Ex-Ambassador Davis, in the best and most impartially enthusiastic book ever written on Russia, "Mission to Moscow," says: "I don't care how much totalitarian states or dictatorships may provide in material benefits or social benefits to childhood or old age; if liberty or freedom have to be sacrificed therefor, then the price is too high to pay."

It is impossible to predict what type of civilization Russia will

develop in the future, because the present generation of young Russians is the first generation that are educated, that can read and write. In twenty years Russia has turned from an about 80 per cent. illiterate to an about 80 per cent. literate people. That is the most important and far-reaching outcome of the Soviet régime. And history offers no precedent for what happens next when 180 millions become literate overnight.

When we flew home from Moscow to London we stopped off at the Tempelhof Aerodrome, Berlin, and had a meal between planes. I gave the waiter an English £1 note in payment. I always remember the way that German waiter looked at the £1 note, laughed, put it in his pocket, and said in English (he had worked in London), "I'll keep that! That's *real* money, that is."

## CHAPTER XXXV

DURING the halcyon years of 1925 to 1930 I was mildly preoccupied with the fact that I was taking a lot out of life and I didn't seem to be putting enough back.

In those years my partner and I were each making a steady four or five thousand a year, and of course we thought we would go on making it. The slump of 1930 and onwards, the partial 1934 to 1938 recovery, the Munich year, and finally the war, were all things undreamed of by most of us. It was in 1933 that I read in the newspapers a remark made the night before at a City dinner by Mr. Montagu Norman of the Bank of England: "Events are now beyond the control of any man or group of men or any nation or group of nations." And seized a piece of paper and scribbled it down. And frowningly read it again (I have that bit of paper before me now), with an inward sense of some bubble, the bubble of my world, abruptly bursting.

But in those halcyon years 1925 to 1930 I was earning a large income, helping to run a prosperous business, was pleasantly in the limelight in a small way as one of the few women who had made a successful career in finance, and I was very happy with my continual Continental journeys and travels half round the world.

Yet the fact remains that I was mildly preoccupied with the fact that I was taking a lot out of life and I didn't seem to be putting

enough back! I remember trying to find out if there was any outstanding woman who wanted a Parliamentary career and who needed financing. If there was I didn't find her. I was on various committees, and of course my Hospital was always in the background. But I still didn't find any sufficient outlet for the "repayment to life" desire consciously within me. I did and could do a little here and there—but not enough. And it was not until 1936 that I found that "repayment" opportunity, that another turning-point came in my life.

In July, 1936, someone whose name I did not know rang me up and asked if I would go to Paris to speak on "Women in Finance" at the Congress of the International Federation of Business and Professional Women. I just knew of the existence of such an organization, but nothing else about it. I first refused, hesitated—then decided it was a good excuse for a few days in Paris, and, anyway, there was a special exhibition of pictures in Amsterdam I wanted to see. So I said Yes. I also heard that my dear friend, Lil Baylis, was going over to talk about "Women in Theatre Management." I motored over to Paris, had a happy week-end with Lil Baylis before the Congress opened, was down to speak on Tuesday afternoon, and intended motoring off to Amsterdam the next morning after seeing Lil off to London.

I had never been to an International Congress before. To me it was a novel and fascinating form of entertainment.

There in Paris, in July, 1936, I saw a brilliant platform of public women of all nations. To me as an old Suffragette it was thrilling, gave me a feeling of unexpectedly finding an astonishing sequel to a story in which my generation had played a part from 1904 to 1912. In those days we had wanted the vote, just the vote. In theory we knew that once the vote was obtained the entry of women into public life would follow. But in 1904 we were told directly and indirectly that although women might get the vote, probably ought to get the vote, perhaps would get the vote in our lifetime, not in our lifetime could we expect to see women in Parliaments and Governments, women in public office, women in all the professions. Such progress would not be possible for our generation—if ever.

And there in front of me on that Paris platform in July, 1936, were contingents of women parliamentarians from all countries: Swedish and Norwegian women; a French woman Minister (al-

though paradoxically the French women had no vote); Senator Plaminkova from Czechoslovakia, for fifteen years a power in the Prague Senate, Madame Szelagowska from Warsaw, one of the finest public figures in social work in Poland. Some of our British public women were there, including Miss Irene Ward, M.P. Distinguished women doctors, lawyers, teachers, writers, artists—from Austria, Australia, Britain, Berlin, Budapest, Canada, Italy, Scandinavia, the U.S.A., and all the world. And, brightest star of them all, Frances Perkins, the Secretary of Labour for the U.S.A., making a special journey from Washington for the Congress, her first appearance since taking office on a public platform in Europe. (Incidentally, Frances Perkins has one of the most unusually beautiful conversational voices I have ever heard.)

Had I kept more in touch with the feminist movement, with women's progress, I suppose I should have taken it all for granted. But as it was it had the effect on me of a revelation; I felt like Rip Van Winkle. Since 1912 I had been absorbed in earning my living, making my way in the business world. And there were no other women in that very masculine stronghold of finance. My contacts with the Soroptimists since 1923 had shown me women in leading positions in business and the professions, but, owing to their rotarian classification basis and completely non-political programme, they seemed to me more as isolated phenomena (as they may still have been in 1923) than solid cross-sections of accomplished fact. Only there in Paris, listening to speeches and reports covering every form of human endeavour, did I realize the immense amount of public work that women were doing in every section of society all over the world, by means of organized groups working through definite national and international programmes.

The magnificent regiment of women! Yes, I suddenly seemed to blink my eyes open into and on to a new world at that Paris Congress in July, 1936.

Incidentally, at our biggest public meeting, right in front of all that brilliant platform of public women from other countries, rose a wild French clamour in the audience of "Votes for Women." It stopped our meeting. There they were, about twenty women chained to their chairs in good old Suffragette style, yelling "Votes for Women!" led by Louise Wyse. Pandemonium! The British party—we were sitting together—stood up and applauded furiously. The platform agitated and appealed in French and other

languages quite without effect. Then the President, Madesin Phillips, without a word of French, but in good American, quelled the French demonstrators and their British sympathizers by sheer force of personality. Next day Louise Wyse sent Madesin Phillips red roses and a vindication of her point of view. And I sent Louise Wyse a 500-franc note and congratulations. I knew it was far more important for French women to agitate in season and out of season until they got the vote for Frenchwomen than to listen politely to the brilliant achievements of women from other countries.

Well, I spoke for my allotted time on the programme on Tuesday afternoon about my allotted subject, "Women in Finance." Not an inspiring subject, because if I am asked what women, as women, can contribute to finance, my candid reply would be "Nothing." There is no sex in discounting a bill or in judging a balance sheet. As for the idea that for a financial career you need above all things a capacity for a deadly accuracy at figures—well, of all things in this world figures are the least amenable to any law I know of. It is easier to get doctors to agree upon a diagnosis, lawyers to agree upon a verdict, than to get any given set of business people to agree upon the manner in which any given set of figures should appear in that most imaginative document known as the balance sheet.

Afterwards, on Tuesday evening, a dinner was arranged by the British delegates in honour of the President, Madesin Phillips, an American, and I was asked to join to help swell the numbers, although I wasn't a delegate or member, but only a guest-speaker.

I remember that dinner. I don't suppose I shall ever forget it. The dinner itself was about the worst dinner I have ever eaten—roast beef and rice pudding, French style. It was so bad that there was nothing to do but abandon it and listen to the conversation going on between the President, whom I didn't know, and the little group of officers around her.

I gathered from their conversation that this brilliant International Federation was yet another of those extraordinary American organizations that do so much for so many all over the world and get so little thanks for it, or even recognition. This one, I gathered, had cost American women—on salaries and budgets like ourselves—£10,000 in six years, while the rest of the world had contributed about £100.

It happened, it just happened, that only a few weeks before that



I had been serving on an important medical committee in London whose largest underlying financial support came from America. (I know that I should say U.S.A. and not keep on talking about America when I mean the northern half of the American Continent. But Mr. Churchill said that Persia was Persia to him, no matter who called it Iran, and asked permission to go on calling it Persia. So to me the U.S.A. is America and I ask permission to go on calling it America—my America.)

I had watched that committee of distinguished medical people cold-bloodedly calculate just how much more they could get out of America (and that committee could have raised the sum required among themselves if they had wanted to). When someone, possibly myself, suggested that as a preliminary to asking for more we should give an expression of thanks for what we had already received, someone else ejaculated, "Oh, don't thank them—or they won't give us any more!" And that letter, drafted round that distinguished committee table, went off as a bald demand for more money (for purely British work) with not a saving line or word to it.

I wasn't surprised. I had seen something for years past, ever since 1918, of the way in which American benefactions, donations, help, were received in Europe—the Continent was worse, even worse, than us British. With my lifelong American philia I was merely cynically disgusted and knew expostulation was useless, drawing merely the inevitable "Oh yes, but then you like Americans!" coupled with the suggestion that Americans only gave the money because it suited them to make us do all the work of investigation, organization, research, whatever it was, rather than do it themselves. But I was quite pleased when on this occasion that distinguished committee received a reply to their almost rude letter, a reply that almost rudely suggested that they should raise some of the required funds themselves. But, of course, being an American letter, it ended with a promise of further monetary assistance.

Americans may read this. If so, don't attach undue importance to it, the undue importance that I myself attached to it at that time. In fact, don't attach any importance to it at all. It took my new American friends themselves during the next few years to make me realize that with many kinds of work it's so much more important that the work shall be done than to argue who is going to pay for it.

Meanwhile the world ploughs ahead through its Rockefeller Foundations, its Harkness and Pilgrim Funds, its wealth of organizations reaching every section of human society—from America. And if the mass of people who benefit by it are oblivious of its source, there are always some people who murmur occasionally, "Those magnificent Americans!" who refer to "a noble sense of responsibility," or who, like myself, echo in more simple and sentimental language, "God bless America—land that I love!"

Some people on both sides of the Atlantic say, "But it's very bad for people to get in the habit of taking without recognition, demanding as a right." Yes, but it's much worse for people to suffer from hookworm and malaria, social and psychological maladjustments, poverty and ignorance and misery, what time you educate them, or a few of them, up to saying "Thank you."

So, my Americans, go on doing just as you have been doing, more if necessary, as seems inevitable in this year of 1943. Destiny, fate, has been good to you—Pay back, pay back! Continue to make your material offerings on the altar-stone of Humanity as your outward and visible sign of that inward and spiritual grace of gratitude, of that humble and contrite heart, which is the oldest sacrifice demanded of humanity.

At that time, however, in that July of 1936, I had yet to learn this point of view. And I felt sick at heart to find that here was still another group of Americans pouring money out on Europe—£10,000 to £100. And that in this case it was actually my own kind, business women, who were giving and receiving. I wasn't a doctor or a parson or a college professor, and couldn't be responsible for the attitude of such bodies towards such gifts. But I was a British business woman and could be and should be responsible for the attitude of my kind of woman towards this American organization.

As I listened and questioned, I learnt that the subject of their anxious discussion now was the fact that the great American parent organization—the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc.—had that year no surplus available for Europe, and in saying that had also said at last they could not go on subsidizing the International Federation unless there were more signs of financial response and responsibility from Europe. And, at that moment, the distinguished American President was gravely contemplating from the figures in front of her a prospective deficit

of several hundred pounds for the current year. Well, I'm not bad at advising and helping organizations to meet moderate deficits. You can always get a few hundred pounds in England for anything if you know how to write a good "appeal" letter. Always. This is axiomatic.

But I was angry. I was very angry. In fact, as someone afterwards said to me, "You started this job in a rage—and rage isn't a bad foundation." The International had been working all over Europe, starting National Federations and Clubs in some twenty countries, and in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, had kept a salaried Director in Geneva (Dorothy A. Heneker, LL.B., B.C.L.) for three solid continuous years (and afterwards in London), with the result that we received a consideration from the International Labour Office at Geneva that they didn't vouchsafe to any other women's organizations. We had some remarkable legislative international work to our credit, and Continental journalists referred to us as "perhaps the world's most influential women's International."

Yet there wasn't a club in Great Britain, and the Americans had been told emphatically that it would be impossible to start such clubs here. The International's only British affiliation was a London group, the British Federation of Business and Professional Women, at that time small, but in recent years much larger and very prominent in various useful legislative and other activities.

However, at that moment I knew none of these things, and was conscious only of being very angry, and I butted in and suggested various methods of balancing that prospective budget deficit that did not mean getting more money from America to balance it.

The result was that I did not motor off to Amsterdam to my picture exhibition the next morning. I saw Lil Baylis off, and myself stayed in Paris for the next fortnight with the group of Americans responsible for the Congress. And I finally returned to London with the glorious title of Finance Chairman of the International Federation of Business and Professional Women, with the responsibility for balancing the budget and ironing out the prospective deficit.

There in Paris in 1936 I met, and during that fortnight I began to know slightly, one of the great American leaders, Dr. Lena Madelin Phillips of New York. For five glowing years, until war made our continual contacts impossible, I worked under her leadership with a sense of exaltation that most people who worked

with her experienced. The work, as all such work must, included ups and downs that brought one in sight of the stars and down to the depths of depression, but through it all was the sense of inspiration she gave. Madesin Phillips is a woman of great magnetism, brilliant mentality, austere values, vision that is more than foresight—it reaches so far and so wide—and deep “compassion of soul” for humanity’s conflicts, tragedies, and anguish.

(Someone—I don’t know who—told me that at the huge Chicago Women’s Congress in 1934 Jane Addams spoke of handing her cloak of leadership to Madesin Phillips, and symbolized it by placing her actual cloak on Madesin Phillips’ shoulders. I wish I had known or even just seen Jane Addams. Such a legend. A woman once said to me, “I met Jane Addams at The Hague. Just met her, nothing more. But even in that tiny contact she made you feel that you personally mattered to her; and when I heard that she was dead such a pang went through me—I felt as if I’d lost something that mattered terribly to me in life.” Vera Brittain said of Winifred Holtby, “The glow of her personality gave one a sense of direction through life.” That is what these leaders do to those who have had the privilege of working with them.)

The other officers of the International Federation whom I met in Paris also interested me greatly. The Vice-Presidents were notable, among them Senator Plaminkova of Czechoslovakia, who was a fine courageous personality. “Plam” we called her, always talking with vigorous excitement in a mixture of all languages that we just termed “plam,” always on her feet, in order and out of order, always dominating respectfully amused meetings with that shake of her finger! Those challenging eyebrows! Eyebrows rising incredibly as she voiced her astonishment, her indignation, at whatever was or was not being done! I was terrified of her until someone passed a cautious whisper around the English delegates, “Isn’t she like George Robey?” We all roared with laughter, and I liked and admired her ever after.

Apropos of the mix-up that quite frequently occurs over a vote taken by a show of hands, “Plam” once said, with that characteristic shake of her finger, when it was proposed to take the vote over again, “No! nevaire retake the vote. When the vote ’as been taken, the vote ’as been taken!” A valuable piece of advice.

(And the last I heard of “Plam” was a notice in a Czech underground paper, “Senator Plaminkova died for her country simul-

taneously with many others," giving a certain date in 1942. Hanged in a Nazi prison! Oh, "Plam"! Dear "Plam"!)

The Publicity Chairman, Helen Havener, was one of those perfect publicity representatives who can miraculously cause a provocative paragraph, an arresting leader, to spring into the world's newspapers overnight—trim, pretty, bright-eyed, she was one of New York's best-known publicity specialists.

One of the New York delegates was Marjory Lacey-Baker, the Director of the Women's Section of the United Hospitals Fund of New York—with a face and figure exactly like a Botticelli. She really had—Venus, Primavera, or the like. I've never met a woman with a Botticelli face before; I thought they were just a creation of the painter's imagination. But no, there she was. And, incidentally, her disposition went with her face, as she helped out with everything, everywhere, at that whirling Paris Congress, with unshakeable composure and quite incredibly sweet manners.

And only those who have organized European Conferences of all nations—and of women of all those so-many-of-them-backward nations—know just what that kind of organizing means. It is recorded that in the earlier meetings of the International, long before my time, of course, so suspicious of everyone was everyone that if anyone asked in any language for a window to be opened the official interpreter had to translate the request into all languages immediately because everyone feared that something was being put over them.

And the job of seating them round the Conference table, those delegates from all countries. Where did you put Italy and France? And what about Germany? In the end the worst agreeing nations were put on the same side of the table, so that they couldn't glare at each other, with wedges of solid Swiss, stolid British, and good-mixing Americans in between. But this was all in the early days, and when I saw the Conference table in action in Paris in 1936 I was struck by the harmony and good humour that the delegates had already learnt over six years; it seemed to me a lot more harmonious and friendly than my brief glimpse of the League of Nations at Geneva.

## CHAPTER XXXVI

THERE followed for me intensely interesting years—from 1936 right up to the present time, in fact—first of all money raising, budget balancing, then club organizing. It brought me the type of contacts I had never had before, with workers in the international sphere in Britain, America, Canada, and other countries, all intensely stimulating and novel.

I had made several trips to America and Canada, had made a few business and social acquaintances there, but had never actually made contacts close enough to be called (by me) friendships. And it was with that group immediately surrounding the International President, Madelin Phillips, and with the Soroptimists, and other similar groups throughout the U.S.A. and Canada, that I made my first American and Canadian friends. And during the next six years, as my yearly trips to America increased that circle of friends, I valued it as one of the most interesting gifts I have ever received from life.

Friendships with people of another nationality, of completely different traditions and backgrounds and social conventions, require continual adjustments. One has to realize clearly that the American social code is very different from the British. It demands that everything felt shall be put into words. Say everything in America—and then say everything again. The British social code implies that practically everything shall be casually taken for granted. Say little in Britain—and then leave that little unsaid. There is no reason to prefer our social code to theirs. Someone has said that the British habit of reserve, lack of expression, genius for under-statement, "is disliked by every nation except the Scandinavians and the Chinese." Probably. To those not used to it it can be as disconcerting and as chilling as the British climate. And certainly friendships with Americans, with the emotional wealth of expression, are very heart-warming. But don't jump to the conclusion that all that emotional expressiveness means a sort of super-friendship. Friendship, love, confidence, admiration, have the same values all over the world, expressed or unexpressed.

However, to get back to that Congress in Paris in July, 1936, and my Finance Chairmanship.

I realized when I returned to London that I had to introduce an international organization, American in its origin and almost unknown in England, to what friends I had and to get some money for it. That was the first job.

At the very beginning someone wrote me, "What's the use of your taking this up? *One* person can't do anything for a big International Federation like this." And I wrote back and said, "One person *can* do something, and I'm going to be that *one* person."

In those days I was sufficiently well-to-do to have given a cheque for the prospective deficit of four or five hundred pounds and have done with it. (No, don't write to me asking for it now—these are not those days.) But I knew that easy way out wouldn't do. That lordly gesture would balance the International budget for one year, and leave it precisely where it was for all the future years. I had to sell the International and its work to Great Britain.

I took my troubles straight to my Soroptimist friends in London. They might well have regarded the International as a competitive form of club organization. But they didn't. They listened to my story, Miss Elizabeth Hawes, Mrs. Cockcroft, Miss Gardner, Miss Cox, and many, many others. They gave me generous individual financial help; they told me emphatically that I would never get proper support for the International and its work until I established business and professional women's clubs all over this country on the American model, and they took before their Board of Governors my urgent plea that they should form these clubs themselves. In fact, from 1936 to the present time never was help from one women's organization to another more generously and chivalrously given.

My Soroptimist friends raised part of the prospective deficit on my International budget. Several friends, including Lilian Baylis, Dr. Helen Boyle, and others, answered my SOS for help by getting their large circles of friends to help. A lot of my clients and City friends also helped. And the result was that when the International Federation went to Stockholm in 1937—it held a meeting in a different European centre every year till the outbreak of war—my budget was balanced with a comfortable surplus; and has stayed that way ever since.

The Soroptimist Board of Governors sent forward to the Harrogate Convention in July a recommendation that their Federation take on the formation of business and professional women's clubs.

It became a burning question: whether the Soroptimists would take on the job of organizing the business and professional women of the British Isles, or whether they should "leave it to the Americans." The Soroptimists invited Madelin Phillips to their Harrogate Convention as their guest of honour and speaker on the burning question, and several of them came to Stockholm to give her a pre-Convention welcome. (All this for the leader of another, to them almost unknown and possibly in the future competing, organization; they carried their idealism far.)

I have said that Madelin Phillips has great magnetism. I received a full exposure to her magnetism in Paris (it took me as suddenly and unsuspectingly as that exposure to pictures on a rainy afternoon in Brighton ten years before). I proved a very good conducting medium. I passed it straight on to my Soroptimist friends, apparently undiluted, because when they met her in Stockholm and Harrogate they were keyed up to an intense interest in the famous but to them unknown American leader. And of course from London to Stockholm and Stockholm to Harrogate I was shivering with nervous misery. Had I "oversold" the great American? Would she affect them as she had me, and, anyway, would she, could she, get them to take on this terrible, horrible club-formation proposition that otherwise I would have to tackle, and from which in imagination I had already died a thousand deaths and endured a thousand failures? And at the same time I was still so heavily magnetized that death seemed to me preferable to failure in "putting her over." I don't offer any excuse for this extreme attitude because by this time you will have gathered that I am a highly impressionable and highly nervous individual.

All this set the stage at Harrogate for a triumph of oratory that everybody who was there seems to remember for ever and ever.

The Convention ended with a banquet, at which Madelin Phillips was the principal speaker, to many hundreds of the leading business and professional women of the British Isles, the largest gathering of its kind ever held up to that time.

Personal magnetism is an extraordinary gift—for gift it is, having no necessary correlation with any other quality, mental, moral, or physical. It cannot be acquired. Its effect on people is frequently incalculable, unforeseen, by its possessor. It is not, I think, essential for leadership, but it makes leadership much easier, sometimes dangerously easy. It is, in fact, a dangerous gift, as dangerous to its



possessor as a Koh-i-noor Diamond or any other great possession that attracts all eyes, desires, loves, passions, and jealousies.

Madesin Phillips makes no appeal to popularity, but her oratory can hold an audience spellbound, and leave them with the consciousness of seeing stars they never saw before.

At Harrogate, an hour or so before the banquet, I received a hurried summons from the great American, found her in a state of semi-collapse. She said she couldn't go through with it, never had been able to speak to a British audience, couldn't do it now. Sweating from every pore with terror at this collapse of my impresario arrangements, I pumped confidence into her in terse, abrupt, forceful sentences, until she suddenly sat up and said with a military salute, "All right, General! I'll do it!" And that was the origin of the nickname "The General" that has clung to me ever since among my American friends.

Madesin Phillips is always a handsome woman. She appeared at the banquet looking beautiful. Like many highly magnetic people, at her intense moments she conveys an aura not only of beauty, but of great beauty. (Remember Ramsay MacDonald in his prime! And someone said of Abraham Lincoln during one of his great speeches, "He strode forward to the front of the platform, face white, eyes blazing, and I thought him the handsomest man I'd ever seen in my life!") I don't know what she said. But from the first word she had the audience magnetized, hypnotized, spellbound. I remember noticing the waiters, and the toastmaster in his brilliant red coat behind her, and the reporters—all, all staring at her with a sort of blind fascination on their faces. I don't know why I noticed them more than the audience I had been so anxious about, but I did.

She spoke for half an hour, and sat down to almost delirious applause from an audience more completely and permanently enthralled than any audience I have ever seen before or since. Permanently, because from that day to this women come up to me wherever I am, all over the British Isles, and say, "I heard Madesin Phillips at Harrogate in 1937!" Until it has grown almost to something of the quality of a legend—"And did you once see Shelley plain?" But if I didn't know what she said, others did, and all that she said has been so often quoted to my proud ears that I have sometimes wondered if anyone could have said in half an hour all the wit and wisdom she is quoted as saying ever since.

But here is the anti-climax. She pointed out to those Soroptimists that as the cream of the successful executive women in Great Britain it was a matter of *noblesse oblige* that they should organize all the other business and professional women. And if the voting had been taken after her speech we should probably have carried it. But—such is the way of agendas and conventions!—we had to take the burning question of club formation by the Soroptimists earlier in the day, during the business sessions. The Soroptimists were staggered at the immensity of the task before them, and although their idealistic leaders tried to urge them into agreeing, and a majority agreed, we just missed the requisite 75 per cent. majority voting at Harrogate and had reluctantly to decide to “leave it to the Americans.”

## CHAPTER XXXVII

IN July, 1937, after Harrogate I went back to New York with my American friends to attend the Convention of the American National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc., the parent organization, held at Atlantic City, because I wanted to find out for myself “what it was all about.”

I knew that it had been started in the 1914-18 war. When the United States came into the war it was necessary to tell all sections of the business community just what they must do to help the war. It was quite easy to get hold of the business men through their Chambers of Commerce, Rotary Clubs, etc., but there was no method of getting hold of the business women; they were entirely unorganized. So that great standby in the U.S.A., the Y.W.C.A., called together a hundred leading business women. And the leading business women met, arranged to do all that was wanted—and then discovered it was the first time they had met together as business women, and they liked it. There and then they decided it would be a good thing to organize business and professional women throughout the U.S.A. Among them was a heaven-sent organizer, Madelin Phillips. She took on the job of forming clubs. In 1919 the National Federation was established. By 1929 it had 1,200 clubs and 50,000 members. And now it has some 1,700 clubs and 70,000 members.

And in 1929 the already powerful National Federation said, "This organization has been such a splendid instrument of good for business and professional women in this country, why shouldn't it prove equally good for women in other countries?" And their leaders went to Europe, organized clubs and federations, formed the International Federation with five countries in 1930, and by 1938 had twenty-six affiliated countries, including Australia and New Zealand.

Atlantic City was my first American Convention. I was stunned. An enormous auditorium, lined with loud speakers. Thousands of delegates. Non-stop press conferences, newspapers featuring the Convention as headline news, its motions, resolutions, and amendments, its candidates for office and elections, its reports and programmes. Photographers snapping "the platform" and "the floor" from all angles, entrances and exits, reporters and interviewers everywhere.

And the heat, 100 in the shade, and no shade. And the noise, the bewildering variety of accents and voices. And the crowds, the sunrise breakfasts and the midnight suppers. And the final banquet, two thousand or so in their seats by 6.30, sitting with the incredible courtesy of American audiences through hours of speech-making, and when I was given the task of winding up the banquet and the Convention with yet another speech at ten minutes to midnight still giving me enthusiastic applause.

Previously, at the Convention Sessions every speaker was timed, anything from two to fifteen minutes, and when time was up a "clapper" sounded and that was that, even in the middle of a sentence. I was put on their programme as a speaker for an official twenty minutes, with the private intimation that there would be no "clapper" if I went on longer. I spoke for thirty-five minutes, telling them what remarkable work their International had done in Europe and how grateful we were.

No Britisher had ever appeared at their Conventions before to talk of gratitude. For six years these Americans had worked to organize the trained women of Europe, had established Federations all over Europe, had held International meetings every year in Europe, had financed research work and representation in Europe. Had worked and paid for everything year by year. They had heard from their own American officers about some of it. But now for the first time one of those European women appeared

at their Convention to confirm it all, to thank them for it, and to tell them that we were at last trying to pull our weight financially, to play up and pay up.

I could say all kinds of things about the work they had done in Europe that those shy Americans couldn't say about themselves, because Americans, the best of them—and there are so many of the best of them—are very shy. They do not yet realize their own great national qualities and great future. Their President said it when he told them that the American nation had “a rendezvous with destiny.”

I could tell them of our gratitude when they hardly realized themselves how much they had accomplished. Some who did realize had begun to think, indeed, that European women had taken it all for granted—all the work and the ideals and the money gathered at such personal sacrifice. They had sent one of their greatest leaders, Madeline Phillips, to Europe year after year, and some of them felt we had not appreciated her great qualities. But I could emphasize all that had been left unsaid. And after my speech an American member said to me, “All these years we've helped Madeline Phillips with money from our clubs for the International. And now you've come and in your talk to-day we feel you've given us our dividends. You've shown us what we've been working for all these years.”

I was deeply impressed by the power behind our American parent Federation. Its 70,000 members and 1,700 clubs included the nation's outstanding women. It was sometimes suggested that such power had possibly its own drawback in that it offered its members responsibilities so great within the Federation that it diverted them from seeking the responsibilities of public life. Leadership within the Federation, instead of being used as a training school for public leadership, became a satisfying end in itself. If so, it was merely a transitional stage, and it didn't look that way to me.

The American Federation is strictly non-party, but part of the power behind the Federation had been built up by its educational campaign to “get out the vote.” It urges all its members to use their vote, local or federal, in all elections—“vote as you like, but vote,” and urges them to urge all other women to vote. Consequently in America—a land of women's clubs (we say “organizations”)—no election speeches are more carefully prepared than the

speeches political candidates deliver to the women's clubs, and the anxious question with all candidates is, "How will the club women vote?" About every attempted innovation or reform, "What about the women's reaction?" or, "Get the club women on to it!"

One research job among many that the Federation was asked to do in 1937 was to make an "Economic Enquiry" among its members as to the incomes and financial responsibilities of the gainfully employed women. The findings were published by the U.S.A. Public Affairs Committee.

Among the findings some rather startling points emerged: 48 per cent. of earning women in the U.S.A. Federation were supporting others than themselves—had actually from one to seven dependents. (Query: Is the percentage of men supporting dependents any larger?) Less than  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of members had private incomes—the so-called "pin-money worker." (Query: Is the percentage of men with private incomes who prefer the self-expression of work any smaller?) The salary of the white collar (we say "black coat") male worker was just twice as much as the average salary of a woman worker.

I was deeply impressed by the deference the Federation received from the national press and public bodies, the continual influence exerted by its Legislative Committee at Washington, the respectful hearing given to its views by all political parties. This is all comparatively speaking—compared, that is, with other countries. Americans may not agree with me, because they don't know other countries; and again, because they are insiders they do not realize how much they have done, how far they have gone. You have only to cross the Canadian border to sense the difference—if you are a woman.

And cross it at the Quebec border if you want to feel the full impact of that difference. Among Canadian women is still the nervous fear of masculine authority, the hesitation to form views, to express ideas; the inward uncertainty of the rightness of such views or ideas should men say otherwise, the disconcerted willingness to be put off with a little masculine flattery.

It doesn't do the world any good. It imposes on men, whether they know it or not, the continual burden of dragging women along on the world's upward progress, always a few steps behind, always timidly hanging back. It's the bicycle made for two—with Daisy looking so sweet, but not pedalling her share.

Incidentally, what a business that Quebec Suffrage position was! Quebec under French law the most backward province of Canada, and of course the Quebec women without the provincial vote and the most backward women in Canada. It took us, the women's organizations in Canada, including our own Canadian Federation, headed by Miss Margaret Wherry and Madame Pierre Casgrain (our own member and wife of the Speaker of the House of Commons at Ottawa), years of agitation to get that Provincial Suffrage for the Quebec women. We got it finally in 1940. But for many, many years yet Quebec will show the effect of that long "backwardization" of women, in all her public policies, in all her national, Empire, and international thought.

Well, that's that for the Federation. During my visit I was motored down to Hyde Park to have tea with Mrs. Roosevelt—simple and charming, dispensing iced tea amid dogs and secretaries—(and duly appeared in "My Day"). I am always too shy and overawed inwardly to get much out of these brief encounters myself unless there is some immediate point of contact, so I watched Madesin Phillips settle herself on the end of Mrs. Roosevelt's settee (they are old friends), thoughtfully curl one leg under her, take off her hat, open her bag, take out her pocket comb, comb up her brilliant silver hair, put the comb back, take out her cigarette case, light a cigarette, and then settle down to discuss with Mrs. Roosevelt the President's policy.

I have always enjoyed my social contacts with American business men, and there is one famous office in Wall Street where I am always intrigued afresh by the celebrated collection of British flags, British pictures, British china, displayed in their fine offices, the pride of the senior partner. Three hundred years ago his family came from England, and his nostalgia for all things British is as great, and with a more explainable foundation, as my own nostalgia for all things American.

I was once gently boasting about English law and order to this group—our Silver Jubilee, for instance; no armoured cars, no racing motor cops, when one of them gently interposed, "And yet I saw a man murdered in London on Jubilee Day." He explained that he was in Pall Mall on Jubilee night, saw a man dash out of a side street, followed by another, who struck him dead with a blow over the head with a bottle, and disappeared. He added that to him the point of interest was the rapidity of British legal methods

in contrast with American. The next morning the papers told him that the man was arrested, and a few days later tried and sentenced—culpable homicide, the end of a fight between two drunks.

During my visit in July, 1937, the overwhelming topic of interest in America was still the Abdication. I remember a luncheon in Wall Street among my business friends when, after discussing "The New Deal" and other problems of mutual interest, I was asked very deferentially—what charming manners American men have!—whether I felt that I could say "a few words" about that enthralling topic. I could and did, seeing no personal reason for reluctance to discuss what all the world and the world's newspapers had discussed non-stop for six months. My personal view was that the Duke of Windsor was an unhappy human being caught in an attachment of such emotional intensity—and oh! the infatuations of middle age!—that it was impossible for him to give up that attachment or to contemplate existence without it. That neither Archbishops nor Prime Ministers nor Empires had any power over that fundamental fact. It was as futile as trying to influence an earthquake by sermons and exhortations—an emotional earthquake.

I met Raymond Gram Swing then and afterwards in all my visits to New York. Always at some moment of international crisis. Raymond Gram Swing is a highly nervous man of immense emotional intuition, coupled with exceptional mental analytic faculties. The two together in such outstanding proportions give him his uniquely brilliant position. We recognized his rare quality here years before America did, even though we had a welter of American broadcasters to choose from. I remember in 1935 a blind St. Dunstan's masseur, as he radiant-heated me, talking about "Raymond Gram Swing's Saturday night broadcasts" and advising me to listen. For years he gave London these weekly broadcasts, and so built up a British public who knew his name as well as they knew President Roosevelt's and with even more unqualified admiration.

Raymond Gram Swing was a young newspaper man in Berlin in the last war. He tells how in December, 1914, the German authorities entrusted him with a peace offer to carry to Sir Edward Grey. Germany wanted peace, would withdraw from Belgium and France, would ask for a financial indemnity as a German face-saver, but would not expect payment. Swing, very young, very

nervous, saw Grey, who received the message in silence until the word "indemnity" was reached. Then "Grey flushed and denounced it as an insult" and flatly turned down the German proposal. And only after the meeting was over did Swing realize he had told Grey that an indemnity would be asked for, but had forgotten to tell him that payment would not be expected. Swing says that from that day to this he has never been quite sure whether by this omission he goes down to history as the only man who might have stopped the 1914 war and forgot to.

### CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE vote against Club formation taken at the Soroptimist Harrogate Convention in 1937 was a crushing disappointment to me at the time. In the end, however, "the Americans" set about the task themselves with the confidence of a cheerful International budget behind us.

A year later, in 1938, we brought a brilliant young American lawyer over, Zonola Longstreth, to start the organizing here. I felt that only an American organizer with the confident knowledge of that powerful and glorious American parent organization behind her could get over the ingrained inferiority complex of British women. She started the first dozen clubs, war broke out, she returned to America, and then immediately our small Federation found a British organizer, Mrs. Nancy Anderson, who dispelled every doubt we had about British Club organizing capacity. And to American amazement and our own we have raced ahead through the war and blitz, forming "one new club for every three weeks of war." A sentence quoted all over America as a little British war-time epic in itself.

The International Federation from New York, backed by the parent American Federation, has paid for the greater part of the expenses of the organizer and organizing—and though they have paid, never once have they tried to influence our policy or actions. Once organized, each club has been handed over by them to our National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, which is self-governing and self-supporting. Our American and Canadian members have



regarded this paying for the organizing of our trained British women citizens in war-time as constructive war work better than ambulances and canteens—though they have given us plenty of these and every other kind of direct war aid. The following letter appeared in *The Times* in December, 1941:

### AMERICAN GENEROSITY

SIR,—You have printed many accounts of American generosity. May I give you a further illustration?

Since 1938 the International Federation of Business and Professional Women from its New York headquarters, with funds chiefly supplied by its great American federation (some 1,700 clubs and 70,000 members), has been organizing British business and professional women, from the £2 a week typist to the £1,000 a year executive, to co-operate in intelligent thought and responsible action on public questions, war problems, and post-war problems. We now have clubs from Aberdeen to Truro, organized at the rate of one new club for every three weeks of war, with more clubs continually forming, all paid for by our New York International office, and all affiliated to this National Federation, which is entirely self-governed "by the members for the members."

Yours faithfully,

GORDON HOLMES (*President*).

The clubs—now over a hundred, and more forming every few weeks—are scattered all over the British Isles, with thousands of members, and will have many thousands more. Those who belong may like to read this record of how it all came about.

I fortunately found myself in 1938, just as with the Soroptimists in 1936, surrounded by a fine group of women idealists. To name a few among so many seems wrong, but from 1938 Phyllis Deakin, Margaret and Dorothy Lappage, Dorothy Walker, Jean Brown, Marjorie Hayward, Nancy Anderson—these were the foundation-stones of the Federation among many others.

I had belonged to few organizations before. And I had certainly never been Chairman or President of anything, and had refused with terror and horror even when my Soroptimist friends had urged such offices on me. I had recognized that other women among them could hold these positions of authority very much better than I could, and that as I had plenty of outlets in my own business for any power complexes I had I ought not to deprive other people of such legitimate outlets.

And I may add, in spite of the years of hard organizing I have done since 1936, in spite of the Chairs I have taken and the Boards I have conducted, the Conventions over which I have presided, and the seething agendas I have waded through, I have never grown to like being "in the Chair." I believe that on the whole I make quite a fair chairman, as chairmen go, but I always feel a most unhappy one. Nervousness and diffidence give me at times, through sheer fright, a dictatorial manner—I suspect they do other chairmen too—and then, conscious that the dictatorial manner has upset somebody, I mentally wobble at the knees at the wrong moment. At least, that's what it all seems to me, although my friends tell me nothing of this is apparent, and that my chairmanship calls forth admiration, etc., etc. All I know is that if ever I take heart and try to act on the consciousness of this admiration it doesn't come off, or doesn't seem to. My one entirely meritorious and unexceptionable act as Chairman is always to bring the gavel down on the official minute of starting, let who will be present or absent, and close with the same punctuality.

I would make a better Chairman if I were not so interested in listening to other people's points of view—and the more unexpected and unpredictable the views are, the longer I listen—oblivious of the fact that they are probably exceeding their time limit, are out of order, or have otherwise broken the red tape of Standing Orders, or, more terrible still, have "violated the Constitution."

Oh, that bugbear "the Constitution"! A very good remark made by an American officer was "Remember your Constitution is just the machinery necessary to get the work done. But it isn't there to stop the work, and if your Constitution threatens to stop any particular piece of vital work, then suspend the Constitution." I have never had the courage as Presiding Officer to suspend the Constitution, but that remark has occasionally given me courage to cut red tape and side-track drastically crippling formalities.

Organizing human beings is hard work, always worrying, sometimes heartbreaking. One is always faced with contracting the vision to keep it within one's own capacities or straining one's capacities to breaking-point—and beyond—to keep pace with the vision. You've got to work with people *with* their limitations, because you can't get them without—and that includes yourself. By the time you are old enough to realize your own mental, moral,

and spiritual defects you are much too old to sprout wings. Don't try. Say to yourself with a grin, "I'm no angel." Get along without wings as everyone else has to. Work with yourself, in spite of your limitations.

But to people of my age, both women and men, there is a certain privilege that such work gives—the privilege of mixing on equal terms with much younger people. Our Federation consists of women of all ages—grey heads and platinum blondes. The result is that people of my age find themselves mixing, working, discussing and arguing on all varieties of public questions and policy with women of all the younger generations from twenty upwards—an invaluable experience. As a rule age mixes with youth on by no means equal terms—generally with an inferiority complex on both sides. But when it comes to discussing resolutions, creating Federation machinery, planning policies, both age and youth are far too keen on pushing their opinions to bother about the age complex.

Organizing women is more and more a world problem, something that concerns everybody. We are permanently facing a two-job world, two-income homes. It's no use talking about women choosing between careers *or* husbands, homes and children. It's got to be *and*. There isn't going to be any choice. We shan't be able to afford homes and children and marriages at the ages young people ought to marry, unless the women earn as well as the men. Women's place was in the home when even the poorest home embraced half the activities of mankind. When the home included baking bread, brewing the ale, growing and dyeing the flax, weaving the clothes, growing the herbs for making medicines, teaching the children, nursing the sick, then the home was a full job for all women. But that home isn't our home of the present, much less our home of the future. That home wasn't a four-roomed service flat with restaurants, crèches, recreation rooms, roof gardens, all complete within itself, and that for many will be our home of the future.

Russia saw it twenty-five years ago. Russia didn't make her amazing developments in twenty-five years by sending women back to the home. Russia did it by getting all women out of the home.

Contrast this with Germany. Dorothy Thompson's penetrating analysis of Naziism begins with the remark: "The Germans began by eliminating all women from political life. All that campaign for getting women back to the home was part of it." And France.

David Scott's memorable article in the *News Chronicle* a few days after France fell sternly emphasized that one of the profound underlying causes was the backward condition of French women, the almost complete lack of women's influence in public life in contrast with the appalling sex influence in French politics. The spectacle, he intimated, of half the French Cabinet vying for the favours of a couple of elderly enchantresses was incredible if it hadn't been true.

### CHAPTER XXXIX

OUR next International Congress was in Budapest in August, 1938. The last golden summer. Warm, serene, lovely on the terraces of the Ritz Hotel overlooking the Danube. Sunshine and flowers by day, floodlit beauty by night. All the world around us hushed to one thought: "Will there be war?"

I travelled to Budapest with the American delegates, and on our way down we stopped off at Vienna because Dr. Phillips wanted to help the President of our Austrian Federation, Dr. Marianne Beth, who was in serious trouble. The Federation had been dissolved by Nazi orders as soon as Hitler marched into Austria. Dr. Beth, as a non-Aryan, had been immediately forbidden to practise her profession—she was a well-known psychologist—and her husband, a distinguished lecturer in one of the Viennese universities, had been ordered to divorce her, and she had now been told to leave the country (facilities denied and means confiscated) or face a concentration camp. The situation was further complicated by her teen-age son and daughter, who were "suspect" of anti-Nazi student movement activities.

Dr. Phillips had been warned by authorities that if we stopped in Vienna we should be watched. In Vienna we drove to a small hotel—deserted except for ourselves and a rather large number of waiters—where Dr. Beth met us, a gaunt, hollow-eyed woman on the verge of a breakdown. Dr. Phillips and Dr. Beth conferred confidentially at a table in a corner while the rest of us talked loudly at an adjacent table to cover their conversation from the all-too-interested waiters. The garden was surrounded on three sides by trees and on the fourth side by a high apartment building.

Suddenly Dr. Phillips said, "What is that light?" She pointed to a light obviously made by a mirror flickering over the trees. And it dawned on us that we were probably being photographed by a looking-glass apparatus from the top of the high apartment building. When Dr. Phillips said goodbye she said to Dr. Beth, "I shall see you *soon* again in America. We shall meet again *soon* in New York!" I thought to myself then that such a farewell was almost cruel kindness, since Dr. Phillips must have realized that even the International could hardly hope to rescue a woman in Dr. Beth's position.

It was a brilliant Congress in Budapest. No Austrians, of course, and the Italian delegation telegraphed obscurely that they had been stopped by order as they entered the railway station. But otherwise we had delegates from all the world, and the Scandinavian women raced down by way of a motor rally from Oslo and Stockholm ending in a grand finale in the principal square in Budapest amid excited photographers and vociferous applause from crowds unaccustomed to seeing women at the wheel. The Hungarians entertained us royally, my banking and business friends gave us every help, we were received by Admiral Horthy, Ministers and Archdukes, and the Hungarian Bar Association (men only, of course) gave a reception for all our women lawyers from the U.S.A., Canada, Paris, and London.

And all the world around us hushed to that one thought: "Will there be war?"

The Managing Director of our excellent Bank—one of the oldest in Hungary—and others of the Board and staff were Jews (and Hungarians for generations), and already they were under the shadow of the Nazi doom. Anti-Jewish laws were being thrust out every day demanding that all Jewish employees be liquidated. My partner and I were very concerned. At a special meeting of the Board of the Bank I stipulated on behalf of the British interests that if the Jewish staff had to be dismissed in accordance with these horrible lawless laws it should be only "at the fifty-ninth minute of the eleventh hour," and that every possible compensation in pensions, bonuses, and salaries should be devised and given them. The Christian portion of the Board agreed, but I was struck by their comparative indifference to the fate of colleagues with whom they had been on friendly terms for half a lifetime.

We felt particular concern regarding the Managing Director

himself, to whom we were greatly attached. My partner and I urged him to leave the country immediately with his wife—he had already sent his young children abroad—and we offered to place £1,000 behind him in London or New York to aid him, while Dr. Madestin Phillips offered him affidavits for the U.S.A. But he wouldn't leave—a quiet, very reserved man with tragedy in his eyes. He said that his duty as Managing Director was to stay by the Bank as long as he was allowed to. He was one of the best-known and most highly respected bankers in Budapest, and he felt that for him to leave the country might cause a run on our Bank and its provincial branches, and spread to a banking panic throughout Hungary. I saw other Jewish members of the Board; some of them were old, heartbroken, had passed all their lives in the service of the Bank; and they too preferred to help as long as they were allowed to, hoping that they might then be permitted to retire into obscurity unmolested.

I stayed on in Budapest with my American friends for a few days after the Congress. One night we motored down to a town—why have I forgotten its name?—to see in the open-air theatre that extraordinary play "The Tragedy of Man," by Imre Madach. On the way down one of my American friends read aloud—oh, so beautifully—the English translation. We motored back in the soft, warm, dark night discussing its stunning impact.

We came back from Budapest—a lovely interlude, a little miniature Indian summer of peace, happiness, friendship, none the less lovely because of the gaunt shadows on the back-cloth of that international stage: "Will there be war?"

Then came September, 1938. Some Wall Street friends cabled me:

"If Germany attacked Czechs do you agree that England would not fight greatly appreciate collect cable."

I replied:

"British Cabinet itself could not answer your question stop undersigned believes event Germany making attack on Czechoslovakia Russia France England will fight Italy sitting fence or highest bidder but if internal disturbances equivalent civil war fomented within Czechoslovakia and Germany interfered on plea of protecting German minorities from massacre then intervention other Powers questionable stop cannot visualise repetition Austria coup because Austrian Army favoured Germany Czechoslovakian

Army against stop present moment England doing everything possible force and cajole all sides giving last possible concession and dare not allow any side to forecast British intervention or neutrality for fear same viewed as excuse for refusing compromise stop undersigned just spent three weeks Hungary regards Hungary entirely under German domination nominal independence hereafter European position so grave undersigned inclined paradoxically regard it as too critical for war yet."

Then came Munich. I remember that Monday night. We motored down to the country, our American organizer, a group of our London members and myself, to open our first provincial club. When we got there we were asked to begin our speeches earlier than planned because some of the women had to see their sons off who were called up. Motoring back at nearly midnight, we passed military barracks lit to the skies with activity, men pouring into them, many of them still in the civilian clothes in which they had just left their homes—homes that many of them must have felt they might never see again. Tuesday, hopeless. The ultimatum expired that afternoon; gas masks had been issued.

At four o'clock I was sitting with an A.R.P. Committee (my first experience of such a Committee) in the large office building in which our offices are. We were trying to work out just what precautions should be taken and what equipment furnished for everyone—first-aid boxes, dressings, bandages! And then my partner burst into the room, calling out, "Roosevelt has asked Chamberlain, Hitler, Mussolini, and Daladier to meet at Munich, and Chamberlain is flying over to-morrow—it's just come over the radio!"

I shall never forget the sensation those words gave us all sitting there. Release from death.

The events of those few days were dramatized for me by the presence and reactions of our young American organizer. All in one morning the American Embassy had notified her to be ready to leave at a moment's notice, carrying only a suitcase and leaving everything else behind her, and a total stranger had walked into her room and fitted her with a gas mask. To that young American, with the incredibly powerful, incredibly peaceful United States behind her, these were just things that couldn't happen to her.

A few days later, motoring home from the office, my car was waved to the side of the road somewhere in the West End, and Chamberlain's car passed—returning from Munich with what we

all hoped was peace in our time. And I shall never forget the cheers. Our hopes may have been foolish, but they were real, the outcome, not of cowardice, but of the moral conflict going on in our very souls as to the moral rightness of such a war for such bewildering causes, motives. The Empire more bewildered than we, stating openly that they would not send their young men to die on the plains of Czechoslovakia to prevent the Sudeten Germans from rejoining the Fatherland. If the British Government had gone to war then it would have been with the most bewildered Britain and the most bewildered Empire behind them.

I went over to New York that Christmas of 1938 to find America seething. During the Munich crisis they had listened to nine hundred broadcasts all day and all night for three weeks, and felt, therefore, that they were better informed than we were. I suggested that listening nine hundred times to statements that might or might not be accurate was not necessarily being better informed, and said that the British public simply would not have listened to such a Niagara of oratory. I asked everyone from taxi-drivers to university deans: "What do *you* think of Chamberlain and this Munich business?" As usual with America, the most vocal were not the most representative, and I was finally able to sort out the conflicting opinions into the following categories:

First there were the extremists—about 15 per cent. of the people making 75 per cent. of the noise, who neither knew nor cared about facts or treaties, regarded Chamberlain as the anti-Christ, asserted that he had diabolically arranged the whole September crisis months beforehand, and that we were conniving with Hitler for the sacrifice of democracy. Then there were the moderates against—about 25 per cent. making 15 per cent. of the noise, who knew their facts and who thought that Chamberlain was not wrong, but mistaken, including a famous broadcaster, who said to me: "Chamberlain made the coward's decision. If he had not there would have been war; Hitler was not bluffing; and Germany had 9,400 planes to Britain's 1,000; but what you are facing is so much worse that I still say Chamberlain made the coward's decision. I would have made the same decision in Chamberlain's place because I couldn't have asked millions of men to die for my opinion."

Then there were the moderates in favour—about 25 per cent.—who also knew their facts, who came very near the 25 per cent.



moderates against, their opinion being that Munich was a knife-edge and Chamberlain slipped down on the right side. To those who argued that the Czechs were let down they replied, "Yes, but they were let down *alive*, whereas you sympathizers would have let them down *dead*. Czechoslovakia could be avenged, but not rescued." The above makes up 65 per cent. And the remaining 35 per cent. were all the inarticulate people everywhere, from taxi-drivers to bankers, who felt that anything was better than war "because what good did the last war do?" This group were so completely outshouted by the extremists that they felt unable to argue their case, which was that—simply, dumbly, and mutely—under no circumstances anywhere at that time could they endure the thought of another war.

I spoke to a group of about twenty Wall Street men, including the famous Professor Kemmerer (the international economist who had the fascinating job of advising on national budgets all over the world). And after about an hour's discussion I asked for hands up for those who would have done as Chamberlain did? Six hands. Those who would not have done as Chamberlain did? Five hands—including Professor Kemmerer. Those who didn't know what they would have done in Chamberlain's place? Nine hands—again including Professor Kemmerer.

Incidentally, one of the forgotten things that made a great impression on a thoughtful section of the community, though it was condemned or unnoticed by the public at large, was England's offer of £1,000,000,000 to the German Government in 1938 to help them change over from a war economy to a peace economy. Buying them off—yes, an honest attempt to recognize their possible economic difficulties; "exploring every avenue," "leaving no stone unturned," much as these phrases are laughed at. We would have been fools, the peaceable portion of the world would all have been fools, if we had not used every method, tried every expedient, to avert what we knew would be the most colossal disaster that could overtake us, friend and foe alike. We had to prove, not to the Nazis, but to our own hearts and consciences, that every expedient had been tried.

"England, having learnt about war, and hating it, thought nothing so important as devising methods to prevent war from breaking loose again."

That was in the U.S.A. When I went to Canada I found that the

Canadians were realists to a man: "We couldn't fight; we were unprepared; the only thing to do was to make peace," was what was said in Canada over and over again. I said to the Mayor of Ottawa (who honoured me by presenting me with the keys of the City): "People say that Munich was like an operation; you've got to have it sooner or later; by putting it off in September you have only made it more dangerous. Would you have operated?" The Mayor replied: "I *couldn't* operate. I hadn't got the instruments. The only thing to do was to wait till I could get the instruments, and meantime hope that the patient's condition might improve." At the same time, Canada said everywhere that had there been war they would have stood behind Great Britain, but they were thankful there was no war.

I spoke and broadcast in New York, Philadelphia, Montreal, and Ottawa, and probably gave some of my transatlantic audiences their first verbal impression of a blitzkrieg when I said, "If we had had war in September by this time there wouldn't have been one brick left on another in Czechoslovakia and hardly one Czech alive."

I spoke in wholehearted favour of the British policy. I, too, was one of the millions who had to be convinced that war, like murder, was inevitable before an agonized consent could be dragged from us. And I don't know how you are going to have democracy without those civilized reactions, reluctances, and agonies.

## CHAPTER XL

THEN came 1939.

In March that year my mother—she was eighty-four—well and vigorous on the Thursday, had some slight digestive disturbance coupled with a chill on the Friday. On Saturday morning she was still issuing instructions about the household, from her bed, catechizing the doctor about his treatment, arguing with the nurse about hot-water bottles—which she detested, but we were using to keep her warm. The last time she spoke was on Saturday evening when I went in to see her. I said: "Won't you keep your hands under the blanket? they are so cold." And she said, very sleepily, but very firmly, "I *like* my hands cold." She died on Sunday night. And with her went the associations of fifty-five years of my life.

Shortly before that my twin brother was killed. He had lived most of his life in the East and liked it. "East of Suez for me!" he used to say. He liked most things. He applied for a commission when war broke out in 1914, came home in charge of one of the first Chinese Labour Corps, went to Flanders, loved his life in the Army (except the first time he went "over the top," when he wrote, "Mother, I feel I shall never be young again!"). Won the Croix de Guerre, went to Cologne with the Army of Occupation, as, I think, one of the Judges of Appeal in the Military Courts, loved his life there, reluctantly demobbed himself, went East again. And when he was nearly fifty he came home and married a girl of seventeen.

Even my mother, who seldom criticized her boys, expostulated with him, and I was frankly horrified. But they married, and five years later he was killed in a Monte Carlo Motor Rally, driving 1,800 miles in three days—just the sort of thing Geoff would do. He was killed running into a lorry on the last 20-mile lap, driving on the wrong side of the road because he was too tired to remember he was in France and not in England. But they had had a glorious time—his young wife was with him—a rush through France and Portugal and Spain and on to the Riviera, triumphantly conscious that he was probably among the first in of the competitors. He went out in a second on the top-wave of happy success. And he and his young wife had had five years of completely happy married life and companionship, with a pretty country house and a flat in Whitehall, dogs—lots of dogs—dances, dinners, and restaurants, just the sort of thing Geoff loved. I remember his zestful exclamation during this period, "Oh, Mother, if you had only taught me to dance when I was young how much more romantic life would have been!" His wife was a very nice girl and a sweet daughter-in-law to my mother. And that was the end of their short but very happy story.

Before my mother's death in March, 1939, I had been run down and unwell for months, and went on being so for a year or more after—low blood pressure and phlebitis. It was one of those years in which everything that can go wrong goes wrong. In June our able manager, who had been with us for seventeen years, whom we regarded as a partner and for whom we had a strong emotional attachment, suddenly announced he was emigrating for health reasons with his wife and two daughters to New Zealand; had booked their passages, sold his house and furniture, everything,

before telling us. He barely got away before the war broke out. My partner, who, like many of us, hoped at Munich, went on hoping all through that winter when our public statesmen were still hoping and talking about jitterbugs. But when March, 1939, and Prague came, Mr. Turner soberly made up his mind that it was going to be war. I didn't. The world drama went on.

In June, 1939, the partner of a famous Wall Street house cabled me: "You have no conception how successful their Majesties' visit to my country has been also I previously witnessed at Ottawa the Canadian enthusiasm all this makes me as happy as I feel sure it does you."

In June, 1939, we held our last International meeting at Trondheim, Norway. I remember Mrs. Borden Harriman, the notable U.S.A. Ambassador to Norway, was with us.

It was a good meeting, enthusiastic and "different" for me because a group of young business women from our very newly formed British clubs came to Trondheim and testified impressively as to all that the new movement meant to them. It was their first International meeting, and they were thrilled with their contacts with the delegates and problems of many countries. We had some 200 representatives there, including the delegates from Czechoslovakia and Italy, sitting side by side. And even the difficult matter of discussing what function the International Federation should fill in case of a World War—a war that would presumably engulf on opposite sides all the members sitting round that Board table—was practically and sensibly handled.

"Plam" was there, of the George Robey eyebrows and admonitory forefinger—Senator Plaminkova from Prague, frailer, quieter, no longer "Senator," because there were no Senators in Czechoslovakia since the Nazis marched in. We urged her not to go back to Prague; we pressed on her passports for England, for America, visas, affidavits—"No, I've too many people hanging to me"—and she raised her arms to indicate a welter of people clinging to her. "But they will put you in prison!" "I should not like that because I could do no work in prison. But I must go back to my people." And back "Plam" went. Rumours about her fate went on for years, and finally a seemingly authentic statement in 1942 that she had been hanged in a Nazi prison with many other patriots. Gallant "Plam."

Madesin Phillips in her public speeches at Trondheim spoke of

the world "rushing to a rendezvous with death." But at Trondheim "the past hung like a benediction, as though to hide for one last moment the awfulness of the future," and we still hoped. And, anyway, Trondheim—Norway, Scandinavia, "the peaceful corner of Europe"—felt itself pleasantly, superiorly, remote from such troubles. They criticized the policy of all the Powers, particularly Great Britain, with a sort of sharp complacency, sure that war couldn't touch them. They felt that they had the kind of civilization that had advanced beyond wars; they felt that they had even evolved a system of economics that ironed out trade depressions, currency troubles, employment problems.

After the meeting my American friends and I went to Narvik, stopping off at Bodo at midnight to meet our club there. Those women who came down to the little steamer to greet us, and took us back to the pleasant hotel for coffee, wine, and talk, thanked Madelin Phillips and America for starting the movement in Norway—a strong organization with clubs everywhere. They said in a place like Bodo and Narvik, halfway to the Arctic Circle, nothing ever happened, and the club had meant the difference between stagnation and life to them. Bodo and Narvik!

Our reason for going to Narvik was because my American friends wanted to see the Midnight Sun and because I simply wanted to see some Lapps and stroke a reindeer's nose. I like stroking animals. I agree with the child who said his idea of heaven would be to gather all the animals into one large garden "and then I'd stroke and stroke and stroke!" I only saw one Lapp, dolled up for tourists at some station, and not one reindeer. And, anyway, I heard afterwards that reindeer are not at all the animals of the Father Christmas legend, with furry, friendly faces and ringing bells. Apparently no reindeer would let you go near enough to stroke its nose, and they seem most difficult animals because they can only eat a certain kind of moss. And the most inefficient, because after they have done a journey of 150 miles they have to rest for six months before they can do another.

Narvik! What a quiet, strange little place it was, everlasting daylight and calm mountains and shining water, and inhabitants strolling about at three o'clock in the morning carrying attaché cases just as if they were going to the office.

We got back to Bergen, and spent a pleasant day or two with our Bergen Club. One old lady bitterly denounced the British for

their complacency, and said that if war came it would serve the British right. I asked her: "But which do you really prefer—Great Britain or Germany?" And with a bitter look she answered, "Which would *you* prefer? The lion or the tiger—if *you* were a mouse?" She said that Norway had suffered terribly in the last war. But that old lady was the only person who seemed to think another European war, if it did come, could touch "the peaceful corner of Europe."

My American friends went home, and I returned to London. At the beginning of that August, 1939, my partner made his usual annual business trip to Budapest. He went feeling sure there was going to be war. In Budapest our friends confirmed it with chapter and verse—war very soon, they said. He came back via Berlin. He was *persona grata* with certain British authorities in our Legation, and knew them well. A senior official told him positively there would be no war, and gave him chapter and verse. A junior official told him positively there would be war, and gave him chapter and verse—"and you'll just have time to get home before it bursts." That was August 15th. Mr. Turner returned to London, and we anxiously discussed all he had learnt. I asked him: "You left London feeling sure that war was coming. Do you still feel the same?" He is a man of careful judgment, and he replied slowly: "Well, curiously enough, I don't feel so sure now that we are going to have war. There is something in the European atmosphere that makes me feel that perhaps we shall avoid war after all."

My partner was gathering information from excellent and tried sources. He had the unbiased attitude towards that information of a business man out to protect commercial interests in our charge. In commerce, if you allow your emotions to influence your judgment, you lose your money. Hence commercial judgments can be more cold-bloodedly impartial than any other judgments I know of.

War broke out, of course, a fortnight later, and I give this little account because I for one realize now how extraordinarily difficult it must be for our statesmen to guess, when they deal with all the contradictory information that reaches them, whether their informants really know, or only think they know.

The world wasn't dealing with a dozen different alternatives in Europe in 1939 any more than in 1914. There were just two alternatives, war and peace, for them to guess between. We always hear afterwards that information has been kept back. But has it?

The information is generally known. But the  $x$  quantity is always unknown. And the  $x$  quantity is human nature in human affairs. In this case, presumably, Hitler's human nature ("a garrulous monk," Mussolini is said to have called him after their first meeting). Of course, after the war we may hear it wasn't Hitler's human nature after all—it was someone else who represented the  $x$  quantity. In the last war it was always said that if we had told Germany England would come in there would have been no war. Well, Germany was told this time.

## CHAPTER XLI

THEN war broke out. And then for a long time one stopped feeling or thinking. One just held on. To everything—tangible and intangible, material and spiritual. Within and without.

I had always wanted passionately to live for ever. Now suddenly the desire left me and has never come back. I don't mean that I wouldn't probably run like a rabbit if death really threatened. But I didn't mind any more. It's rather a comfort in air raids to feel like that. One just turns over in bed and goes to sleep, because one can't make oneself feel that it matters whether one gets bombed or not. (I always did—worries, miseries, anguish, have kept me awake, but never air raids.) Different things make different impressions on people—on some the bombs and guns and noise, on me the black-out makes the greatest psychological impression. I notice that whenever I read in books or papers the word "light" or "lights"—it catches my eye, fixes my attention. Something we can't have, something we mustn't have.

In April, 1940, I went over to New York. I knew at the time it was a few weeks of miraculous happiness snatched from out of the jaws of Something. Owing to delays in Liverpool sailings, I had to make a dash at twelve hours' notice for Genoa, via Southampton, Havre, Paris, and Switzerland. I had never expected to see those places again.

Even to sit in the Havre buffet, watching half a yard of French bread cut up before me, tasting the curious and delicious flavour of French butter, the bad but realistic French coffee. Even that—for a meal I didn't want, but took for the sight of it and the made-

moiselle behind the bar sharply chipping the French soldiers. Even that—gave me yesterday. (“Oh, God! put back your universe and give me yesterday!”)

I wonder where little Mr. Matthews is now, the Cook's escort who met me in Paris, took me through all the war-time formalities and deposited me in my Milan train. Mr. Matthews, the Englishman, who told me he preferred to live in France because life was freer than in England—“you can do what you like more; nobody interferes with you here.” In April, 1940, in a restaurant overlooking the Champs Elysées. And Paris looking lovely in the spring sunshine. Then waking up at five o'clock the next morning crossing the Lake of Geneva. The dazzling yellow gold of the sunshine on the walls of a white house, the blueness, the stillness, the white Dent du Midi. The sensation of running backwards through a tiny gap in time to a completely unchanged world, pre-1939. Everything bright and still.

And Genoa, the sensation after only eight months of black-out regulations in England of having the French windows in my hotel overlooking the harbour wide open with all the lights on. And the boat s.s. *Washington* with the wonderful Stars and Stripes painted on the sides. “When you step aboard an American boat you are on American soil,” said the advertisement. At my table was a very young American, William Russell, afterwards the author of “Berlin Embassy” and a notable novel “Robert Cain,” but at that moment just out from three solid years in Germany, making preoccupied mental adjustments to a non-German world. And the completely blissful twelve days' voyage to New York—the Southern route in April sunshine that burnt us brown as hikers by the time we landed.

And American friends welcoming one as if one had arrived from the dead.

And then the news. May 10th, breakfast in bed in the Biltmore Hotel. The waiter wheeling the table in with the newspaper folded on top. Hitler invading! Holland! Belgium! Luxemburg! France! The lovely skyscrapers staring down at one through the fourteenth-floor windows like stark exclamation marks every time one raised one's eyes from the newspapers.

And the sympathetic panic—for us, us British—of one's American friends. Raymond Gram Swing's agony of apprehension on his sensitive poet-musician's face. And in the country friends



taking the radio secretly into the garden where they could listen to it and I might be shielded from its terrible news in staccato American voices.

In those few weeks we watched from across the Atlantic the collapse of Europe, and America was one vast sound-box of European effects. When I left London in April, 1940, we were acting as if the Germans were 3,000 miles away; and when I left New York six weeks later they were acting as if the Germans were marching down Broadway.

And Mr. Hoover, ex-President Hoover; I saw him on my last morning, a big, very quiet, very tired man. I said to him: "Mr. Hoover, when war broke out you said that you thought the Allies would win, or win through to a stalemate, provided we undertook no unwise military adventures. Have we undertaken any unwise military adventures?" And Mr. Hoover said: "No, except Norway, and you've drawn out of that."

"Do you still think we'll get through?" And Mr. Hoover said: "Yes. The American public have got this whole position completely out of proportion. No country can be conquered from the air. Of course you'll lose the French Channel ports; but as long as you have your navy guarding your Channel ports on the one side and your ships bringing in food to your western ports, *Great Britain can hold out for years.*" And the relief that flooded my mind at that quiet, emphatic sentence! (Other American authorities gave me six weeks before the collapse of Great Britain.) And Mr. Hoover added: "This talk of Germany having twenty or thirty thousand planes is nonsense. She never had more than five or six thousand first-line planes, and she's lost fifteen hundred of those in France." (At that time the talk had been as if Germany was made of planes, but Mr. Hoover's statement subsequently proved correct.) And as I walked out of his sitting-room that end of May, 1940, he called out after me: "Now, don't feel too depressed. Things are better than they seem." And those short, quiet sentences still remain the best prediction and summary I heard.

And an eminent Swedish economist in New York writing me: "You will understand me if I do not want to speak about the Scandinavian situation, Norway at least being beyond my comprehension. There is only one thing I would not want my own country to do—cry out only for British help. Even if only as a gesture I think they ought to remember, and say it openly, that there is no

reason to ask any more of you than of other great and secure democracies in the world. We have no more military alliance with Great Britain than with the U.S. And if we have to yell out for the defence of democratic and humanitarian values, those ought to appeal to somebody more than you. Please excuse this personal outburst. But I cannot help as a 'small neutral' feeling a little bit ashamed that we and the rest of the world always take for granted that all duties are *yours*."

And through it all the loveliness of that visit after what seemed æons of inward unhappiness. The peacefulness of the American scene. A flying visit to Cambridge in Maryland, a little white-and-blue town of white colonial houses and blue water, fifty years back in time.

Among my memories is an auction room in a small American village, or rather a series of dusty auction rooms, all opening into each other and giving one an endless vista of American history. There were the crockery, the fine china—turn it up, yes, brought from "home" a century or two ago—the home-made, home-painted furniture of frugal pioneers, the cabinets and parlour sets of settled communities. And the rockers. The rockers! Everywhere were piled the rockers by dusty dozens from porches all over the country. Some of them had rocked steadily through two revolutions—the Civil War and the Great War. And now waited to rock through another war and rock steadily into another peace.

And at last my departure. My American friends trying to persuade me to stay with them—a month, a few months, permanently, anything rather than have me go back to the falling ruins of Europe and crashing Britain; and my consciousness, as I gathered my friends, their persuasions, and my baggage into taxis and sped down to the New York docks, that nothing could keep one from England, even though better-informed people in New York than I warned me I was sailing straight back into a German concentration camp.

But I didn't. After a peaceful voyage I sailed straight back to the sunny harbour-side at Liverpool with—instead of Nazis peering round each corner, as New York newspapers led one to expect—the pigeons cooing and strutting on the Customs sheds in the sunshine.

## CHAPTER XLII

THE months went on. The war went on. The blitz came. Office, staff, business, home, still stayed perilously intact. Always the blitz was on the next floor, or the next house, or the next street. Like everyone else, one always seemed to be grabbing broken bits of everything and holding them together.

The organizing went on, one new club for every three weeks of war. I spent all my weekdays in my office, and all my week-ends in trains. Edinburgh—and the guns bringing down the first Nazi plane on the Edinburgh hills as our new Scottish members signed on. Dundee, Aberdeen, Penzance, Liverpool—just as it was staggering out of its first blitz. York—and crawling home at midnight in a snowstorm. Berwick—and the first women's dinner ever held there. Boston, Hawick, Northampton, Manchester, Harrogate, Morpeth—and driving home from Euston or St. Pancras with the flares falling and the bombs dropping. Train journeys with the bullets spattering on the train, travelling, speaking, and organizing through two of the most bitter winters on record.

Our young Federation held quarterly board meetings all over the country—Halifax, Nottingham, Newcastle, London, St. Andrews, Leeds, Leicester, Sheffield, with two or three hundred delegates and members crowding to them. And those were the only times I was frightend—terrified—of the blitz. Until I said goodbye to the last member and knew they were safely on their trains headed for home, I was terrified lest the Nazis should choose that week-end for blitzing that place.

Our National programme included a series of queries: Women's employment? What effect is this war having on the gainfully employed women? Women's horizon has widened, but why is it still so narrow? Why do women seem to succeed in planning and fail in achievement? Or do we fail? Are we perhaps measuring achievement by age-old masculine definitions? Should we perhaps see women's achievement all around us in a world of changed and challenging psychological conceptions? What are the causes of this war, the last war—and the next? Economics—what do they mean? (Someone defined economics as "you eat or you don't eat.") The importance of the individual, but must rugged individualism mean millions of ragged individuals?

A member said, "Our Club has meant all the difference to me between life worth living and life not worth living." And another member, "All I have learnt of public problems and world affairs I have learnt in the last few years through this Federation." And another member, "This Federation is an adventure in minds." And another member in a small blitzed town, "I don't know how I would have carried on but for this Club."

That winter I sent to my American, Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand friends a Christmas card called "Shelter Madonna" sketched by an artist friend in a moment of inspiration. The card showed the usual conventional "Madonna and Child," the shining halos, the gifts, the Star of Bethlehem, the rough surroundings, but the Madonna is resting on a shelter mattress against a shelter wall dressed in shelter clothes—slacks and heavy shoes, thermos and cup beside her. The gifts to the Babe—a toy aeroplane—are being offered by a child in a hooded siren suit. Against a background of searchlights the Star shines like a bursting shell. The card made a deeper impression on many of them than all the headlines of the bombing of Britain.

My American friends sent me Carl Sandberg's Biography of Lincoln, four volumes, 3,000 pages, and during the worst months of the war, Dunkirk and the winter air raids, I began reluctantly to read it while the blitz was going on overhead—it seemed such an immense thing to get through. I got so fascinated that I couldn't read anything else. And when I had finished the last volume I turned back to the first volume again—until finally I had to drag myself away from it, realizing that at this rate I would never read anything else. I know of no biography like it. It is like watching a slow-motion movie of Lincoln, of everything about Lincoln; what he said, what was said to him, what was said of him; what he thought of himself and of others, and what others thought of him. Finishing it, I felt as if I had lost a friend. I felt as if I, too, could say, "I knew Lincoln."

It is most comforting war-time reading. All the muddles and mistakes, all the ideals and aspirations with their seeming hopelessness in such a world, all the goodness and badness of human nature mixed up on both sides just as in our time. And in the end triumph for that one plain man's ideals. Nothing in all the illustrations made such an impression on me as the photos of Lincoln taken a few days before his death. He had won through at last, and

his face, his homely face in those commonplace photos, was transformed and shining so that you knew he was happy with a sense of having fought for his convictions and having won.

The months went on. Another spring, 1941, and a phone message from marvellous Mr. Rogers at Cook's. A Clipper reservation I had made at some freakish moment in an irresponsible past was at long last available—theoretically. My American friends seized the moment to urge my attendance at two Conventions—in Victoria, B.C., and Los Angeles—and a Coast to Coast speaking tour, telling American and Canadian members all about England in blitz-time, and above all about our blitz-time club organizing, for which they were paying and of which they were so proud. To them the most exciting war work on the battlefield—one new club for every three weeks of war.

The excessive ease with which every date was accepted and booked by the Clipper people in New York, the excessive difficulty of getting a British-Lisbon-Airways seat for any date. Until pressure cables from America and Canada induced the M.O.I. to suddenly offer several dates.

Then Lisbon. And the excessive ease of Clipper dates and booking vanished in one minute inside the Clipper office. There weren't any dates or bookings, only queues of people, hundreds, waiting. Cables, cables, cables.

And Lisbon, ten anxious days there which seemed an eternity, among hundreds of travellers and refugees from all over the world, all longing to get to America or Britain, all trying to get on the Clipper or British Airways, the one topic of conversation, "Has he given you a ticket?" "Have you got a date?"—anxiety-neurosis in every voice.

And then, at last, America again, La Guardia airfield. And after that airfields and trains all over the continent. Victoria, Seattle, Boise, Los Angeles, Windsor, Detroit, Buffalo, Corning, Wheeling, Montreal, Newcastle, Pittsburg, New York, Halifax, Monckton, St. Johns—airfields rushing up to meet me, little groups of strangers—so quickly, oh, so quickly friends. Reporters, photographers, radio stations—"In the studio to-night we have Miss Gordon Holmes just arrived from England." The friendly audiences, the knowledge, the most comforting a speaker can have, that my speech, even if given to the coldest listeners, was bound to interest them.

I had known in my bones that some time this lecture tour would come, and for ten months past I had gathered in a perpetual notebook always carried on me every scrap of blitz news, overheard conversations, my impressions, other people's impressions, of the blitz that I knew American audiences would want. I tried to give them a verbal photograph. And on the urging of my American friends I always wound up with the story of "Thunder Rock"—that American play by an American writer which, after failing in New York, was adopted by us in England as our war-time play. That story of hopelessness transformed into a surety of hope, the hero's escape from life changed to an inspired rush back to life, and the shining certainty of its message, "All these ideals we talk of will come anyway. But we can help them to come sooner by looking within ourselves for leaders—by faith in ourselves."

One incident of my tour happened in a Canadian town on an incredibly hot night—almost the hottest I have known, I think—and just at the moment when I felt that no cause and no organization was worth such an effort and such fatigue as I seemed to be feeling I saw a woman being carried in, in the arms of a hotel porter, her husband leading the way. I was told that she had been a helpless invalid for fifteen years, and that it was many years since she had been outside her own home, but that she had determined to come and hear me speak that night. It made me feel my effort small in comparison with hers, and she told me afterwards how happy she was that she had been there.

I met Raymond Gram Swing again, just back from his almost sensational reception in England, telling America that he thought London was the happiest city he had ever known because we had learnt not to be afraid of fear; saying that he had found heroes, but no heroics; drama, but no dramatics. Mr. Swing is a modest man, and only during this war-time visit did he perhaps realize his unique standing with the British public.

The most moving happening of my tour was a luncheon, spontaneously organized at Los Angeles in honour of the International President, Dr. Madesin Phillips, and myself, by a group of refugee members who were present from all over Europe. In the middle of that big luncheon gathering there was a large round table at which were seated our refugee members—our hostesses—whom the International Federation and many other organizations had rescued from misery in the occupied countries in Europe, some perhaps

from death. As I looked at those foreign members I was struck by the difference in their frail physique as compared with the splendid physique of the American women all round them, and it flashed through my mind, "Ah, those are the people who in their adolescent years during the last war were fed on frozen potatoes!"

To me that luncheon was moving beyond words. In the bygone world of 1936 and 1937 I had met many of those women at the brilliant meetings of the International in Europe. All those women were distinguished in their own professions—doctors, lawyers, writers, artists, teachers, experts in many vocations. I had met them when they were holding positions of prestige and dignity in their own cities, and had enjoyed their generous hospitality in their own charming homes. In later years, 1938 and 1939, I had met some of those women again—in deep distress, positions and careers gone, victims of the Nazi oppression, whose only hope, perhaps of life and liberty, was to find friends abroad who would get them out of their countries. Dr. Madelin Phillips was among those many friends who with infinite difficulty brought these women out of Europe and then worked to re-establish them again in careers and amid surroundings where their mental and spiritual lives could once more find happiness.

And now I'll tell you something. Dr. Marianne Beth of Vienna—that time we were in that spy-infested hotel garden in July, 1938 (it surely seemed spy-infested to us), and Dr. Beth, brilliant, cultured, and distraught under Nazi Jewish persecution, looked at us with haggard eyes as Dr. Phillips reiterated, "We will meet again soon in New York!" And there in front of me at Los Angeles, in July, 1941, was Dr. Beth. A well and happy woman, telling us how many friends had got herself and her husband both out of Austria, and established them in California, she in practice again as a psychologist and he in a lectureship at one of the Californian universities. Their young daughter had found refuge in Canada and had been helped by our Canadian Federation to complete her education at one of the Canadian universities; her son, after passing his degrees in engineering, had joined the American Army.

Dr. Beth gave us a toast, the toast, she told us, that refugees drink, leaving Vienna at dead of night, not knowing whether the next few hours would mean escape or disaster for them. They drink "To the future!"

As I watched that scene and listened to those refugee members,

many of them part-way through their citizenship papers, proudly talking of "our" country and "our" problems, with their roots already striking into the great new country around them, and as I looked at Dr. Beth herself, I thought:

"I'm glad to be alive in a world in which such lovely miracles can happen!"

THE END